Long writing 1989-1990

“Mirrorgames”

the Shards from the breaking of the mirror

1 Before your names: self caught in its own reflection
2 Before your names: precious this waiting
3 Dad: camera as a mirror
4 The last person of me: window as mirror
5 Sparrow: dream of terrorism in Greece
6 Seabird: waiting for Bobbin
7 Puffin: the kosher dinner
8 A personal unconscious: mirror and splinters
9 Bratsby and Bunny: the temple
10 Seabird: the dream of impeccable flight
11 Cavalier: scholars and gentlemen
12 Puffin: guilt by the canoe lake
13 the Collective unconscious: levitation in Gurnard
14 Hawkeye: catching the breath
15 Sparrow: first three poems of avalanche
16 Hawkeye: poem for Jude, patron saint of waifs and strays No 1
17 Hawkeye: poem for St Jude No 2
18 Cavalier: poem of birth trauma
19 Someone's only sister: the drowning
20 Mum; the doctor's office
21 Hawkeye: poem for St Jude No 3
22 Sparrow: poem of avalanche No4
23 Sisters: showering without the shadow
24 Hawkeye: poem of impeccable flight
25 Cavalier: the shimmering lake of glass
26 Puffin: Momma's stare
27 Hawkeye: 3 am and maudlin
28 Cavalier: of windows and wives
29 Sparrow: poem of avalanche No 5
30 Gentle reader: the funeral
31 Hawkeye: poem for St Jude No 4
32 Cavalier: minotaurs and sentinels
33 Seabird: poem on Pal's wisp of wind
34 Puffin: poem of a rambling promise
35 Hawkeye: poem for St Jude No 5
36 Hawkeye: filling the screen
37 Cavalier: Chigwell and the dilemma of Narcissus
38 Hawkeye: poem for St Jude No 6
39 After your names: mirror fictions
40 Sparrow: poem of avalanche No 6
41 After your names: flight of the djinni

42 After your names: waiting for the gaze of djinn
43 Puffin: the kidnapping
44 Hawkeye: the final courtesies
45 Seabird: snowwhite connection
46 Hansel and Gretel: the first and last story
47 After your names: I turn away from the wedding again
48 Dear everyone: the coda

Before your names:
self caught in its own reflection

In the middle of an otherwise nondescript adventure dream, I came upon
your hand placed touchingly on a shoulder. . .
Was it mine, the shoulder or the hand?

You and I seemed for a moment to be engrossed in a dance, a sort of ritual of identification, I lost the thread of what you were trying to tell me, it had been very important for quite a long while. . .
Then suddenly the hand was gone, several times I had opened my mouth, the most elusive of all movements in my dream. . .
When does a dream become someone else's?
I mean we all have heard of the situation in which one thinks one could be acting in someone else's dream, as if my existence is a part, a branch say of your trunk, liable to grow of its own accord, but finally and fatally the same structure, part of the same pattern.

Always the floating away, I mean you moving from me, is this a dance? I couldn't tell. . .
The hand placed on the belly thus, in sympathy. . .
I made it happen, reforming the pattern, the poise of a gesture given in tenderness, never lost, nonetheless forgotten in the white rush of my time these moments away from you. . .
Your face now forming beneath my eyes, unlike the you I know from all the mundanities, a refreshed happiness awaiting recognition, all this time unknown. . .
Have I ever waited?
The self caught in its own reflection, forever forgotten, never mortal, pursued into a forest, trapped in the shade of an oak, persuaded by the birds to stretch forth, they are singing the light into abundance. . .
The smile awakens, your smile on a different face, it has become my sister. . .
yet I don't have a sister. . .
you are looking at the pattern of the tree.

The language of my dream never speaks, it can become lost as soon as the mouth is recognised, because. . .
We walked, you walked, I followed, could not catch up, could not fly, could not. . .
The bird has given us a clue, not to follow?
Stirring now, the actual colour growing alive on its wing, stretching so that we can see how it does fly, the dance of its place in the air, supporting, touchingly on the bough. . .
which, unexpectedly, bends, is breaking. . .
your arm, has it followed?

Before your names:
precious this waiting

Your eyes are gradually forming out of the mists of the street through which many times I have gathered people to my call. . .
At once, you have walked past me in the crowd without noticing, but because I pick up on one resonant sound as your ear finds air. . .
a breeze blows the wisp of the swept back hair. . .
In the city, sound is suspended while mere noise gathers away from our future
connection. . .
Just to hang around, it will wait, but never in a dream, the self is concerned never to
waste. . .
it always does depend on the others within my sight. . .
The crowds at mid-day, a landscape of detritus, cars flaring violently, the colours of their mute velocity a humdrum range of differences acceptable to social identity. . .
the drivers hunched if male, declaring a sentence to idiocy, their glance / their gaze / the men / their cars / their cars. . .
But always the cut-away shot. . .
the movie poster, man with gun, man will shoot if that car will move, the sights are set, the hair wisps back. . .
My heart misses a beat, the cliché dies hard on this corner, with waiting, with the passing of each second. . .
each passenger on the pavement, always moving. . .
The alertness over the years gradually subsumed with preoccupation, a promise, a vendetta buried the passionate interest in life. . .
the vendetta is of time, of the recurring images of the places that one knows, has come to despise, very slowly, the whole time just waiting, just.

Occasionally I think it is you, the snatched sight of something just around the corner now. . .
The piling of detritus, the amassing accretion, the heap of things placating and placated, burying and absorbing the consciousness once given, never taken away. . .
Altogether glad to have been given life, that's for sure, but forgotten, leaning at this corner the only reality for now, sifting the heads, hair, jackets, legs moving, feet, no shoes are the moving parts, everything else slides as it should. . .
The ancient material of the sky frowns peacefully, no breakage in the layers will allow one (s)word to break through the mirage of our mundane, what could it be?
Is it precious this waiting?
You are worth it, undoubtedly, you are not worth it. . .
the value of worth, you will not arrive. . .
the thousand, the million passing are perhaps one person of my

increasingly chromium dream, the shiny particles of faith englobing, pushing the street along under my feet. . .
The sliding sensation of not knowing of the desired, speaking of the vastness of the second, the other, the almost shattering presence of your wistful otherness in my dream, nameless yet.

Dad:

camera as a mirror

From only this moment, digression fans out like a halo around the saintliest of possibilities. . .
Life beckons in all its diverse particularities, but I'm not interested. . .
it's only you who are impatient. . .
Get on with it, like a dumb child who can't get dressed in the morning, hurry up!
It's time for the photograph, you are waiting, even though you take several eternities to set up your light meters, your this-and-that meters that I can't even think about, they're so. . .
But here he is, I'm smiling, keep it up, my face will crack, has his face disappeared behind the camera?
What happens if I stick my tongue out at the last moment, or if I blink? (I always blink). . .
Will you see, and be angry, another shot wasted?
No, because there will be many shots, well later, not now, because now is when I'm six years old, I'm remembering you see. . .
it's the personal unconscious, I'm reaching back to recover, or is it re-cover?
I'm six, dad is thirty-three, do you remember?
See I'm already calling you 'Dad', that's what I used to call you, the big changeover from 'Daddy', that was for kids haha. . .
I'm a big boy in my new blazer that's too big, why always the clothes that were too big?
“He'll grow into it”, the hateful phrase. . .
embarrassment in the clothes department of the provincial, musty grey-and-brown uniformed Co-op store. . .
Anyway I'm in the garden, I'm wearing the blazer, it must be a weekend, or a sunny afternoon after school, I'm still waiting for the click, it's a snapshot before all that messing around with darkrooms, paper, negatives on a hanging string. . .
it's just a one-off, for the album, but I'm facing the sun, this is stupid, why do I always have to face the sun, always?
Squinty eyes in the photos, and everybody else looking relaxed, why am I never relaxed?
Something's wrong, no click, you're peering at the camera, another delay while I look at my socks, they're new, well new-ish, grey, well it must be a school uniform, no this is before then, young, I was six, this was before all that stuff. . .
Well it's fixed, but I've lost all interest, I'm just thinking about my cars, the lorries, vans, and. . .
“Come on, smile”. . .
Smile? It's squint at that sun, and it's click, another failure. . .
Photogenic would be a word I would learn painfully, later oh god later when

the movie camera came out, but I can't even talk about that, because it's so repressed, so cut out from reality, the embarrassment quivers on the periphery vision even now, are there some things one can't even face at all, through one's whole life?
The sun through a mirror, pouring out the image called emptiness.

The Last person of me:
window as mirror

From the first person to the last, it was myself. . .
Every morning I woke up, and it was the same me as before, no difference, except that I thought less about what was happening and more about what would happen. . .
This state supposedly neurosis. . .
nearer the head than the heart. . .
I looked out of the upstairs window, I often just stare and stare from this particular place, I know there is nothing of special import or importance to look at from this vantage point. . .
But it's just an exercise in numbness. . .
a pointed, pointless readjusting of the mind away from the trivia of thought. . .
The only occurrence a passing minibus with no passengers, or the builder's van. . .
I must have moved from the bed to the window, how did I do that?
Sometimes driving from one place to another, usually perfectly familiar with the route, but each time a different set of people in their cars, but I haven't remembered a single turning, a single busy crossroads, there is something (periphery vision?) a slight knowledge of the marginal, so that one knows but still does not know the slight imbalance of friction at the edge of. . .
That's the point, there is no edge supposedly, experience just sort of curves off. . .
Meanwhile the window is a frame, my own still-life keeping maddeningly still, this same detritus of normality fills its every millimetre with whatever is the opposite of promise.

From the last person onwards, I could not dissolve, there was no more me to yield to the inspection of the gods, they were satisfied I suppose. . .
Every time a nearly fatal accident, for instance on my bike, or in the old and decrepit van I used to drive those years ago, I would pray but for what?
Survival?
I couldn't guess what use that would be, what use. . .
I promised myself no italics now, just re-emphasis, what use?
Dissolving is an art I know. . .
those Buddhist manuals on how to stop reading must have been devastating to the mind when oratory remembrance went out of fashion. . .
But I'm digressing, the frame looks good, photography would never capture

what I'm feeling now, the hum of trivia in suburbia, the absence of characters, plot and story, how refreshing, but can it be kept up?
Is this only the start of a text completely solipsistic?
If I keep on asking questions, there is safety in the number of answers you have to
submit. . .
you.

Sparrow:
dream of terrorism in Greece

My hands were watching yours. . .
it was a routine dream. . .
One of the adventures I think. . .
your hands were very sparrow-like, you said always they were going to be arthritic, like your mother's, I don't know. . .
In this dream you wore graceful hands, they themselves fluttered like the dove's rather than the sparrow's. . .
The transformation. . .
we are in Greece, on holiday possibly, but it could be an event above that normal run, an event of some sort of inevitable landscape that egged us on to possibility (and then probable cause and effect). . .
But we are in Greece, that's for sure, with a bunch of other people, can I remind you of something you cannot possibly remember?
First of all because you can have no memory of this, it's all within my dream, well it's certainly a thought of wonder that one could partake in someone else's dream and still remember, but anyway we are there and travelling together, such a calm relief to be together again I should remember. . .
The one process to know with dreams, only the essentials are recognised afterwards, yet at the time everything is very clear, very logical, if only we could transpose those realisations. . .
but would they be of any use back here in the land of the conscious?

Together, we are separated from the main party, there is some danger. . .
Yes perhaps it's a revolution, there are certainly some very angry men stalking around with weapons, with rifles, grenades. . .
There is a sense of confusion, as if a curfew is enforced, a sense of inhibition simply with living and going about one's business in peace and certainty. . .
That memory being scattered, dust is everywhere. . .
men are swearing, very angry. . .
Through the swirling, dusty pathos of former earth I can just make out your face a few yards away, you are calm until one of the soldiers snatches

your arm and you are led away. . .
But hardly protesting as yet. . .
we do not realise the seriousness of the situation in our happy but incongruous mood.

A letter to someone asks them always to remember shared experiences in between our own news. . .
How can I pretend to be writing letters to the various personalities within you, when there is such a senseless interplay between dream and reality?
Especially when that reality is very distorted in itself, where it stretches the truth to such a degree that I or you could hardly tell the difference between happening and fiction, indeed the boundary is so grey as to be hardly distinguishable. . .
On what is a memory based?
Visions of your face surfacing from the unconscious to my conscious world, the seeing, watching and understanding that can only take place when there is intensity, the peaks of emotion from which such stories are assembled.

In my dream, we are separated by unseen events and a lapse of time takes me into a house of indefinite dimensions. . .
some would have this type of dream-building taken as a model of the psyche (whatever that is, in my cynicism). . .
But suddenly the building is teeming with the terrorist soldiers, the house changing into their headquarters. . .
The power struggle between them and I has shifted, they are now in control. . .
I am suffering at their hands, the dirty beige uniform matching the landscape of earth become dust. . .
Many recollection of the Amnesty pamphlets' warnings filter through sudden and awful. . .
to be actually in this situation is impossible but true. . .
And now everyone of our party has disappeared, as my fear becomes stronger so others dissolve into the long term memory, until even you are gone, consigned to an oblivion of total self-placating while I struggle to escape the bonds of the
terrorists. . .
Another time lapse and I'm on the roof ready to leap into safety, a momentary fragment of flying, so satisfying the slight levitation, balancing the personal power of being able to escape against the painful shame of flight. . .
And I'm on the road, walking, dusty, still in parts, still afraid. . .
They appear at the door, shouting. . .

it's possible to gauge that they will soon be upon me. . .
There is a terrible instant as I start remembering you again before the fear takes over from the relief of escape. . .
At that moment of awareness, I am chained to you for ever, no one will break the bond, the sparrow appears to fly free, yet all around me still. . .
Until the new reality of the dream in self-consciousness seeps in, its inevitability dries the mind to a seed. . .
In this present it could grow, but as always the dream snaps off. . .
I'm left only with the decision. . .
should I go back for you?
You who are placed irredeemable in the house, in the mansion of my own dream psyche that I have dared leave behind. . .
in fact, let's be honest, have been bludgeoned by unconscious elements into fleeing from, in fear and humiliation at the thought of torture. . .
But you are still there, I can only assume. . .
are you in danger from the torture?
Or is it the fact that I have led off the soldiers been a decoy so that you can escape?
Sometimes sacrifice seems very non-conscious, hardly a courageous act of the will, more like an ineffectual charge of the wrong sort of emotions, those which sweat and fear until they generate the wringing heat of submission, and then one is a hero for something unintentional, the whole folly extremely suspect. . .
This mirror of realisation is unwelcome, a cold and fetid problem deeper than the mind's labyrinth can offer, can show. . .
At the point of awakening, a twinge of existence barking up the wrong tree has nailed this drama to the wall of becoming.

Breaking through the dust and the heat, smelling in my dream the melting sweat of disintegration, the colours ochre and green, the dust of the ochre taking over the green sweetness, oppressing the sense of victory over the frightening and real situation, smothering its freshness and disdain. . .
the scorching pressure of the mediterranean sun bursting the veins of the grass until the green bleeds out of all awareness. . .
Our clothes and bodies are steadily covered with the dust falling like rain, steadily building up also from the earth, a cloudy passage of dust clarified and dulled in the heat to a throbbing vacuum of colourless intensity.

Your hands were lost in the dream from that very first recollection. . .
you were always hiding them, afraid of. . .
Between the knees, the first brave admission of your supposed psychological problem. . .

placed there, they glowered with the unhappy movement of remorse. . .
Where to put them, where to put the face, the mind, the laughter bubbling just behind in eventual uncovery. . .
The more you talked about those hands the more you unfolded in conversation, the more dangerously laughable they became. . .
We snickered pleasantly at their morbid and veined beauty. . .
But in the dream, not a sign of them.

Seabird:
waiting for Bobbin

In order to fix this writing, in order to date the past, re-remember the distance and the emotional reckoning. . .
to place the look between you and I, the start of your effect on me. . .
And you, in your little terraced house with the threadbare rugs and the wooden floor, where I paced slowly, the rugs already having been paced by the years of half-stilled marriage. . .
Your superficially smooth, doped-out really, half-Italian suited husband, he worked for your father, so had to stay in politely with the family on all matters, despite everything, despite the rows, humiliations, silences, the anathema of half-Italian silence, had to keep smiling every 9am. . .
You said once, breathing four inches from my face. . .
when he gripped into you in the ritual night, you felt nothing, and you knew he felt nothing really also, underneath the neo-hippy unsuited macho problematics. . .
Some little sardonic voice had whispered. . .
you might as well do it into the toilet for all the communion. . .
So you thought of shopping lists, that standby of the dispossessed, the owned. . .
you breathed this fact on to my mouth, was it true?
I can ask you now, since you will never reply, lost to contact, mislaid the address. . .
You're married to a Norwegian I've heard, with another child to add to those starry girls Bratsby and Bobbin. . .
I don't know how you look now, just the face I see in my recurring dream of

you, and your white shift I recall, standing as you were in a friend's kitchen, Pal of later cameo fame, catching the sidelong sun from the window in the simple cotton dress, while I lounged, drinking coffee, amazed at the unfolding friendship. . .
this was years previously though.

So I'm at a significant event now. . .
You know, I must explain about these strange cycles of significance, because it's all in the writer's craft ha, and since this is the postmodern age, and we're all fragmentary dear, and the so-called author is dead, so everyone from Barthes onwards has assured us, has pronounced with deadly serious playfulness (their name on some shiny book jacket at £26.95 a kick). . .
Yes the author's kicked the bucket, so s/he must make deadly sure s/he conveys all the necessary structures and implementations, remaining open to accusations. . .
Let's see all the objects, the signifieds, the thingamebobs lined up and running, I mean let's all ogle at the framework chums. . .
Well as I was saying, a significant event, ah it's larded into the main memories or mirrors of the book. . .
like a cake it's an endless apple strudel of dreams/events/dreams/fantasies/appropriate selections of experience and so on, one bounces off the other and concurrently, all the others. . .
And besides, it's supposed to keep you (the dear and gentle reader) happy by its variety. . .
the snappy interaction, general interest for the general reader and shows that I've spent more than two minutes thinking the order, the scheme of things, the system of linear time and so forth, or is it the assembly of the logic in the schema, well?
Most of the significant events have happened in the last year at this damned teacher training course I will want to bore you with, but anyway some of them are real memories (not a contradiction in terms) yes real figments of my distorted and stretched imagination. . .
well some would say they really happened, I don't know. . .
Yes it's a shame, having just recently read a Henry James Preface, the man says he. . .
He spends 10 000 words telling me that “the Awkward age” is not based on a play, one of his miswritten drawing-room dramas, we all know how touchy uncle Henry was about his plays. . .
What's the one nobody can remember the name of?
'Guy Perdome' or some such French chap. . .
seems the thing was booed off the stage and there was HJ in his top hat awaiting the plaudits graciously, all he got was the metaphorical tomato in the chops, the stunningly bourgeois bum's rush, for the next ten

years did little else but whinge on about the dramatic schemas of his long and (some say) windy novels. . .
windy as in 'wind-y' full of wind, or windy as in entrancingly meandering, we'll probably never know. . .
Well anyway, in the Preface he calls his own handling of the incitements to events as necessary to be an “exquisite management”. . .
Such as I admire old top-hat-and-tails, this here now is the fragmentary age, 'awkward' as it is also, where all any of us who are honest can do, is to shove the shattered pieces and places of our imaginative lives together and hope for the best. . .
In this case an event corresponds to something that happens or happened in waking reality-as-a-dream, rather than the surrender to Orpheus (or is it Morpheus? could be both I suppose). . .
So that was a little digression for you the reader, now back to you the Seabird. . .
Each chapter heading the you in question for the nonce, the second person split into the fragments for looking at the desired objective from all imaginable angles, the supreme and obsessive voyeurism of something tantalisingly complete yet pulling apart in its manic energy of atrophy, just a song rolling at twilight to keep the fireflies away, full stop.

Well there you are Seabird, back to the significant event, in time 1978, I got a call from you when I was at the shop, haven't told you gentle reader about the shop yet. . .
just take it from me for the moment that I ran a shop (wholefoods) and you were pregnant, although 'with child' sounds more well-rounded, prosaic. . .
Anyway you were shaky on the phone, could I come round?
The suit was at work driving your dad's van. . .
were you about to give birth?
Ah the quickening blood, the call for help, the damsel in what?
I'd known you for ages, an old acquaintance but never well known. . .
I rushed round. . .
I'd spent four years or more building up the business, I could do with a break ha, always rushing round everywhere, couldn't stop, no holidays and so on, loved the shop, I was married to. . .
Ah but you'll hear about her, another you, the nearest to a sister, later. . .
Complicated my/your fragmented psyches/animas. . .
You were calling me, I had to run, had been running for years for Mammon, why couldn't I continue to run towards you, the emotional swansong etc?
But this was urgent, a calling in the blood. . .
not of the body, but of its need to breathe air into blood. . .
You'd hobbled into the shop these last few weeks with Bratsby tugging at your dress. . .

Ah yes your friend Webster had a photo of you and her on the beach, you were enormously and proudly big with child, a ripe fruit, flaming pink-brown turned beautifully and exquisitely browner with tan. . .
No one usually has photos taken of pregnancy, it's something to be hidden under cloaks, the dull catalogue maternity wear, modest creams and light greens yeah. . .
I'd liked that photo though it took several perusals before I could really look, I had to tell myself it wasn't off-stage/obscene. . .
actually, why should it be?
We live in the modern so-called liberated age, but when a woman wants to show her soon- to-be baby it's not allowed until afterwards when she's actually post-natal and invariably feeling crummy/exhausted, hormones wildly hopping from one foot to the other, everything to do, her people goo-gooing around the cradle of little one, relieved that everything's OK, for baby at least, happy mother should be shining, they fling their embarrassing glances all over the sensitive thing new-born. . .
But you were gorgeous in your flamboyance. . .
I could have kissed that taut smoothness all over with certain brotherly modesty and happiness knowing nothing was amiss. . .
Anyway I didn't see that photo till a long time after it was taken. . .
at that time I hardly knew you, I was married, I mentioned that, you knew that, yes. . .
I got to your house in about three minutes and ran the stairs, thoughts flashing, I'd read recently of some rock star who'd delivered his own child at home, doctor was late arriving and so on. . .
everything OK, it got into the dailies as a 'fancy that' caption, in the mind my brain was racing overtime, what could I do, poor little entrepreneur and naif that I was?
What did I know of cords and cutting, of towels and water, of the support and thrust, of contractions?

And then, and then. . .
I was in the room, it was a room, it was full of the gentlest light. . .
you were sitting in bed, serene, waiting for. . .
What, not me for sure, but you said “oh you're here, I'm so sorry it's a false alarm I think, you came anyway”. . .
“Uh” was my considered reply, I don't think I even said that, the smallest gulp perhaps, do you remember?
Is it, or has it been of any importance to all at you?
Suddenly it was a mirror, I looked slowly at myself in you, but there was no me. It was pure you, a foretaste of the later shattered mirror, but here golden, unattained, yet to be fragmented into more than one figure, still the only one, unbroken. . .
The blonde, golden, almost luminescent you, filled with a still and solemn

vitality that curved and swam around you in clarity, in certainty, your Seabird self really assured now that you knew again the absolute intensity of childbirth. . .
this was Bobbin in the making though no one could realise. . .
I slowly turned, looking out into the street packed tight with houses just like yours, the different colour paint, curtains faintly murmuring your breath, echoing the faint movement of your hand on the bed cover. . .
The opposite side of the street now gradually erased as your curtains swayed further, the window open, the heat of July, the running heat with the trailing of nets across the first foot of space in your/my room. . .
I was slowly a part of it, slowly. . .
Four years of racing were slowing down. . .
the pain was excruciating yet sweet. . .
The temperance of velocity into mildness. . .
would I rush out as quickly as I had come in?
After a further long interval watching the slight sway of the nets I swivelled just gradually around. . .
“I'm sorry” you and I both must have felt. . .
But such an extraordinary intimacy without words, touch, feelings. . .
any of the stuff we usually take for emotion. . .
an intimacy without knowing you, a shy admittance of the event as significant, the lightness of being your self in me. . .
But like the photo later it would have taken a lot of looking at, and it (in you) was too bright for that one moment to hold. . .
I might have stayed, but there was no reason, or excuse at least. . .
I couldn't rush to the hospital and pace (strictly reserved for husbands) or wait to be usurped in the room by Suit or Dad, or be of any practical help. . .
or even be a friend. . .
If I had felt the least part a reality in your life, it wouldn't have mattered, I would have stayed all day, all night. . .
We recalled the event, years later, during the face-to-face intensity, admitting finally the closeness, why deny it?
But why didn't we say, or stay (we said at the time), with Bobbin stretching and calling her budding wing to me?
Yes, unlike the usual dream, waking reality doesn't force the ego to submit, not always anyway. . .
this time we had a choice, we don't always. . .
More of you Seabird, there's a lot more to story-tell. . .
of your hair, your eyes, the golden and your effect on the narrative yet to come. . .
Sleep sweetly until the dream awakens you once more to my tale.

Puffin:
the kosher dinner

With Mozart's flute concerto hovering in the room, I write this page for you. . .
It's become a habit, this playing of Mozart, the commandeering, if you like, of his spirit in music as a background from my recovering of you, whoever you are at one time. . .
Wasn't it Hesse's Steppenwolf who found his precious Wolfgang Amadeus at the end of all the rooms, after the final bout of hallucinations, beyond the last wisp in the curve of saxophoned cocaine, the silent yet melodious cell at the end of all the rainbows?
Maybe that's what I think will happen with you, that I'll find you in style but surprise in the little room of my dream, your multiple but conjoined image,

after all this setting down on paper, the atoning and exorcism and roughcut prose style, spontaneous and jumpy to some. . .
so many mirrors, so many doors if you like, finally one day I will look in through one and see. . .
A divinely harmonious amalgam of you all, all the fragments of my searching. . .
Hawkeye, Sparrow, Seabird and Puffin, as in some of the dreams where you take on two or three or more of the different characteristics and these and other human beings to become another new sister and another companion. . .
What did Hesse say at the end?
I can't remember, will have to look it up, and it was as though Mozart had always been waiting there patient, as the harmony of true music (or humanity) always is, always a little more to know, always some to be discovered, in the case of music always in the presence of the composer when their music is playing. . .
But does this mean the author, the composer is the authority or does s/he just reflect something greater and deeper than we already know, or are prepared to let in?
Beethoven once said, from his deafness, that the greatest music he had heard was the stuff he could never write down, which could not be written down. . .
beyond notation or intellectual grasp. . .
The 'unstruck music' saint Kabir called it, as he sat in the divine swing. . .
Anyway it passes the time, while I enter reverie about you. . .
This compulsion to write down the significant, the important events, the turning points of our long association.

Here you are dear Puffin. . .
I've just met you, it's 1975, this is no fantasy. . .
it's a report of reality, about one of the most accurate (in the sense of true to memory) you'll find in this whole tissue of distortions and stretchings of the truth. . .
Yes it's when I would sit around in the Polytechnic, that scummy-ish pit of a student canteen and dosshole that exists in all campuses, where the dregs of lunchtime though collect, swirl around aimlessly, scuff out the side door. . .
and I sat there twice a week, most of the day with my little wholefood stall. . .
before the days of market, of shop, of big deal plans for 'the Cafe'. . .
Anyhow I'm sitting there, Pal at my side, he used to drop by, hang around, serve and move around, good company, days when we were close, that's a whole another story. . .
Otherwise only women in this story, except for Cavalier, close reader of this

text, he's later anyway. . .
I'm sitting there and the girl Puffin walks by nearly every day, just stands there staring at a point about two feet behind me, slightly cross-eyed, page-boy hairdo (it used to be called), bowed over with what I found out later was much Jewish fright and guilt, abstract father loss and fantasy and so forth. . .
All good middle-class cultural backlash angst and anguish. . .
So she'd hang around, never politely passed the time of day, as people usually do when browsing, just looking. . .
she occasionally bought a packet, most times not. . .
Until one day, out of nowhere a shuffling, shy sort of conversation about , well I don't know, lost now in the misty ethers chaps, can't tell you. . .
but it's like a dream (this part of the story) perhaps because it's so long ago, perhaps because the events seemed so traumatic and stretching at the time, one sensation after another. . .
It's time lapse and the next thing I can remember is that she's talking to Pal about all the usual stuff he was exhaling at the time. . .
the quasi-spiritual material, Yoginanda Bogeynanda, Amir BS Swami hows-your-father and the royal path to yoga and mystical delights etceterah (no offense). . .
Totally absorbed he was unburdening his obsessions for the handy half an hour, but with sincerity it's true. . .
He thought she was open, free-thinking and so on, could say anything to her. . .
I just kept shtum, couldn't imagine anything to say, just sat there, bottom stuck to the seat, getting on with the job, serving someone every five or ten minutes. . .
business was slow, the beginning stages you know of this wonderful enterprise, it was just a co-op venture really then, nothing special. . .
So she's a good listener, he's doing a favour he thinks, by introducing her to all these swamis and brahmins and so forth (and I supported him with silence approval). . .
Now recently material and psychological, sorry Pal this is your cameo and it's not (time of writing 1990) very flattering, still you did get an honourable mention which is more than some of you bastards have, I'll make sure of that, and since then I have been through so much 'soul-searching' as they say, about my friendship with you, so much to atone for, but that's, yeah you guessed it. . .
This went on for weeks literally, the Pal/Puffin monologues (gradually dialogue to be
fair). . .
And then one of those extraordinary moments.

I know what you're thinking dear reader, not another one like all the rest,

bleeding hearts and epiphanies, soldiering on, making a big impression on the egoist front. . .
and all because he wants a few peaks in this welter of troughs, of fiction, of mordant fantasy and obsession he calls a text, well you're reading this, you can put it down anytime, right?
So in this one moment Pal leans back on his mouldy ex-studentbum chair, leans right back, almost keels over with embarrassment because it's obvious the channel is directed to me. . .
Once more I stop and think now, what are these moments?
I'm going to be flinging a few around in the next 80,000 words or so, and you gentle reader are going to be consuming them, so do I have to explain myself?
No, because any of you with half a brain cell will recognise any one of these instants fairly well in your own psychic/ecstatic/downtrodden lives. . .
It's just a phenomenon of the spirit, I nearly said the soul, but that is near the knuckle I grant you.

This part of the second when his head jerked back and I saw her face this time looking straight at me, not a foot to one side, or down at the black-eyed beans. . .
It was obvious (he later told me) it was amazing, and so on. . .
I simply took over the chat instead of putting in a mealy-mouthed word every quarter of an hour or so, just took over from that very point and didn't look back. . .
The difference between that you talked now a little bit, all the anguish started to take a form. . .
description of your grotty bedsit in darkest Edwards Road, stagnant suburban Southsea, crochety landlady, away from home two months, born and bred in London, Golders Green my life. . .
“Where are your friends in London?” I asked innocently. . .
“I have one” you replied, had to think for the name there myself, as I wrote this. . .
Alone at college, a familiar story, but this was extreme even for forlorn students. . .
Anyway after about half an hour of this, it was back to Pal's house for a cup of tea and more revelations, and somewhen amongst that crazy journey you were asked out – 'out'?
By me I guess, although it was never seemingly discussed, was it some kind of etheric message?
Nah just a shy sort of proposal to relieve the agony of not knowing what to do, as these things normally are. . .
Sitting in Pal's house, waiting for Webster (that's Mrs Pal) to make her way home, she was admirable under the tough nursie exterior. . .
there's another novel(la) here about the interior and exterior of nurse

consciousness, see sequel “Nurses in mirrors” (unwritten). . .
For the moment there is total awkwardness, what to say after the cup of tea. . .
but come to think of it, I don't remember embarrassment, was this because I'd sooner erase the memory of it, or do these more golden afternoons happen without any thinking-type fright at the time anyway?
So it's an invitation to dinner, I'm getting to the point now, it's an event rather than this poncing around with editorial/authorial comment and ancient metaphors for the metalanguage of fiction-writing, that all you moderns out there love to read, don't you?
A date yes, an invitation round to the transient chez Puffin, for a kosher blend of what?
I had no idea, but I got there somehow the next day, to find confusion, incredible complication of juggling with about five components of a vegetarian meal, you weren't of the non-meat faith at that point, this was for my dubious honour and benefit, a new experiment for you. . .
Underneath the four-ring Belling, an enormous stack of every different type of saucepan. . .
“How come you're only cooking with those two tiny ones you brought down from London?” I ask you. . .
I'm heading for psychic disaster for the next five years, but I ask anyway, what's going on?
It's (unbelievably) due to a couple of verses in an obscure manuscript (finding its way trance-like into the canon bible) written thousands of years ago by some old beat- the-meater in Palestine. . .
he certainly never would have thought it would see the light of day, prophet or not. . .
Sometimes these mirrors have a totally obfuscatory way of creating themselves out of nothing. . .
three thousand years later I'm quoted this old fart's recipe for idiocy by a sweet young woman I've just met, the essence of it being that one can't mix the milk products with the meat products. . .
You know the kind of mealy-mouthed crap. . .
the cloven hoof of that and the footprint in grass of this, and everybody's completely paranoid anyway, not the graceful African nomadic life, but a squirty kind of non- playfulness which has haunted the Jews from that day to this. . .
So all the careful families, synagogue frighted and gossip charted all the way back to the boudoir have to have a separate set of saucepans, frying pans, casserole, you name it, for the two different kinds of food. . .
Cute but crazy, you're thinking reader, so what's the problem?
The problem is that if you're not sure about what the pans had been used for in the past, you can't use them anyway can you Puffin?

So the two little orange enamel thimbles you brought with you will have to do. . .
Two hundred pages of rants against organised religion!
Ten volumes of subtly worded sound-offs on Judgment Day against that scumbag filth of faith that keeps the masses in their place, down there in the basement, and all the books that string along with them. . .
there's no excuse for language here, we're all guilty of it, the manipulation, in the blood, no doubt about it. . .
These two totally obscure verses of the prophetic fart's pronouncements, after a heavy onanist session in the desert no doubt.

So I'm standing there with a stupid smirk on my face when it sinks in, this is the start of my mini-guru adventures with the Puffin. . .
I had to tell her, smartypants I was, how stupid this all was. . .
And then the revelations, all the other incredible pranks the priesty hierarchy plays on the congregation. . .
no spending of money on Saturday for instance, that's right Saturday, the Jew Sabbath, Saturday for chrissakes, pardon me, it's the busiest day in their goddamn week. . .
not to travel on buses. . .
Even though it means you could walk miles, unnecessary miles in the drizzling rain to meet me on another occasion, this was before you shook the habit of abstract faith. . .
I was waiting, thought curiously you'd stood me up (in the old phrase). . .
but no, I'd forgotten, no bus fares on a Saturday. . .
This is the tip of the iceberg I tell you reader, any of you who are not of the faith. . .
though it's not my purpose here to inform you of the labyrinths of the Jewish mentality, it's just the same as any other mentality, finitely endless and complex but just more nauseatingly so than most. . .
That's another book (in this little mirror, two more books suggested, not bad). . .
Your face across that Belling cooker, the look I was to know so well across the years. . .
first straight ahead, then back to looking a foot either way, couldn't tell sometimes because the slight cross-eyedness was more pronounced at times, then a sheepish look and a rally-round to the old principles. . .
ah well, let you get on with it (how can I argue?) I've only known you five minutes. . .
Ah but the old mini-guru compulsion comes shocking through. . .
it takes me over, I can't help it, I'm off, ranting about stupidity and needlessness, what you need is (etc etceterah). . .
Until you say yes, it always has to be yes, there are five hundred mirrors of you looking that same way until if I look at a steady diet of them. . .

The mind becomes unleashed, unhinged even, and not capable of fending for itself amongst that crowd of impressions/illusions/delusions and so on. . .
No need to stop for a break those five years, I lapped it up. . .
it was my breakfast, lunch, tea and supper (yea verily I commended by subtle use of language and eye contact) you followed, you had to, it was compulsion on your part too, you didn't know what you were doing. . .
it takes two to tango, that won't be the last time I'll say that in this text. . .
Anyway the meal was OK, it was a relief to be with you, funnily enough now I think of it, it was the first time, out of all those times I'm to describe, the first slip into that sisterly relaxation that I'm always looking for right up till now. . .
It's all going to change now of course, I'm exorcising it in this book, don't you see?
Yes, or am I simply feeding it?
No, don't even think about it. . .
Should I give you Puffin (as opposed to the other fragments of reflection) more author- controlled mirror-shards here, just because more happened with us?
Yeah why not, my sweet sister that even looked like me, the others have been opposite, different structure of bone and flesh, but you and I were twins, little one, as we doddered along 1975 through 1980, our small lives intertwined. . .
Though it wasn't the first time I'd been so close to somebody that at times I forgot that you were a different person. . .
is that the recipe for a mirror image?
Ah there'll be a few of those with the Circle later, but for now I leave this mirror and step out into. . .
Less of the same, a hard act to follow, Puffin. . .
my crime being that I tried to do just that.

A Personal unconscious:
mirrors and splinters

The whole book to be made up of splinters, of fragments. . .
The metaphor a smashed mirror, the post-fragmentary exhaustion of possibilities, the curled wisp of anger beaten back into submission. . .
And in each splinter. . .
a section, a story of its own, whether from dream life, reality of day-to-day life, or fantasy. . .
around these four sisters, their displaced staring of layers upon layers of shattered face, slivered being, appearing and equally dispersing. . .
To piece back a mirror still leaves the lines, the cracks between the splinters. . .
No amount of surface scuffling or shuffling will meld the glass together again. . .
This is also a personal statement, a variety of biographical material, what-might-have-been and what has been processed through dream life. . .
The author no longer the authority but something more than a tape-head. . .
From Dr Carl (Jung) it's the model of the collective unconscious streaming towards, evolving to, and surrounding/gripping our conscious mode of thought. . .
(In between?) the personal unconscious, that web of pulsing energy wrapping around the attempt to write, the act of composition that is passing through my hands right now to you dear reader. . .
whoever, wherever you are. . .
For you are the other you, I'm not just talking to the trees here, even

though they probably listen in their own unwrapped way, nor to that tantalising bunch of shattered shapes that form the busted glass. . .
but for you out there in your home, your bed-sit room, your gracious mansion, your upturned snivel of a pit where you lie bleeding of unrequited intellect. . .
It's all mapped out. . .
It's in easy-to-read sections. . .
I've called them mirrors because, to spell it out, each bit is a shard, a splinter of me-in-you, or possibly you-in-me (well, the second is the case when writing is going on, where dreaming is going on, the first when you my sister may pick up this text in the future dream, and scan its heretical pages for a glimpse in front of the mercury). . .
you might ask why?
It's not simple. . .
maybe the compulsion to set it out begins the quest for you, the leading question of who you are and why you. . .
As I scribble, a thunderstorm breaks the violent heat and Roehampton (where I write the first part of this crumb of confidence) is covered with menacing clouds, that in fact bring relief from the summer dog-days I've spent shimmering and breaking open for you, in unrequited writer's cramp, just to set this down. . .
The fair copy, the view according to this particular human being who is probably no less shattered apart than you are. . .
The memories, dreams and fantasies roll through the process of becoming some refreshment that pours down on me after all this time of heat, suppression, entanglement. . .
Sheet lightning does not crack the ground, my desires do not reach a conclusion, drifting back to earth, swept up in the rain, soaked and washed away. . .
All gone in one year, two years, all gone home to the oblivious past. . .
Or is it the future?

Bratsby and Bunny:
the temple

This time a mirror into the future. . .
Several times I've had to squint at this splinter. . .
it's one of the tiny ones, hardly noticeable, but full of the most interesting shades of colour clashing, like Vonnegut's Deadeye Dick looking through the hole into life, from his sojourn in eternal night. . .
A crystal glimpse into the already heralded schema of dreamtime. . .
It's a dream lasting five years. . .
I'm walking with Bun, but it's years before she's born, no I think she was on the way, in the tummy, a nine months' journey into light. . .
Anyway I'm holding her hand. . .
but in my dream perception at that time, it's Bratsby (your own child, Seabird) I knew her then, she is curiously both my daughter and not my daughter, unlike Bun who is always my daughter and the real one too. . .
We're walking into a temple very familiar to me and there's no one in there, just empty with pillars stretching up to the sky. . .
For some reason I expect there to be crowds, but their spirit must have floated away, just the aftermath of surging devotion hangs on the air as the coda of a symphony would permeate the concert hall, the clarion call to a human response always

fading. . .
Suddenly I spot a figure standing on the stage, I walk towards the steps leading up to this stage. . .
they're cream-coloured, a sort of marble, without the patterning. . .
It is me only, because Bratsby has been forgotten. . .
in this dream it's not fear that blocks out the other, it's intense morbid curiosity, the same stuff that gets me into trouble all the time, looking for these sisters of mine, doubly so when the mirror is smashed and all the broken shards lay shuffling together uneasily in front of my fevered gaze. . .
But here I am alone now, staring at the man. . .
he is standing still, upright, commanding, sensual, forbidding, not serene though. . .
He points with one finger to a badge on his right side of the chest, my left side as I look at it. . .
The badge is of some kind of animal, in a forest perhaps, the image is compelling straightway. . .
As my concentration increases the badge is larger and larger in size, or am I just getting nearer and nearer?
Or is the man growing bigger as well?
Nothing matters in this intense heat of concentration as my eyes are glued on the expanding awareness of this animal, it's like none I've ever seen or perhaps will see. . .
The fact that I'm seeing at all then is that I'm hooked, the mind riveted into submission. . .
it's the devil talking it must be, he's got you at last, all these years resisting, being good and wondering what it's for. . .
And now in one dream, like Eve in Milton's Paradise, a whisper in the ear and I'm right there looking at him, being pulled in, ever closer, ever closer. . .
and now after a very long time, I'm completely concentrated sensually, the most I've ever been, this is total, and then. . .
The image on the badge contorts, another animal, a beast, this one I haven't seen before either. . .
rearing up on two legs and swaying, the other was still, the transition from stillness to movement and back again, I'm hooked, I'm hooked in, never before, never before, never before. . .
The images begin to flood now, spin and spinning, again and again the protean change from one beast shattering into the next, sparks and splinters of the image firing out in all directions, glancing into my eyes, ears, mouth, an ecstasy of sharp incisions caressing the malleable mind. . .
Faster and faster, accelerating, this is more than I can bear, my hand is a weapon, the gun, the axe, every thought of derision, hate, confusion I've never pursued down the vortex, it's climbing up from the side of my

body, swinging away into the dream. . .
The beast images changing so fast a spinning blur, and a thousand distinct impressions at the same time. . .
the circle of the badge has filled my whole vision, it fills more than my whole vision, beyond panic, beyond fear, the anxious serenity beyond barriers of ego, breaking beyond. . .
a mirror is smashed but the image remains intact, its past the power of light to break, the arm rises slowly to take aim. . .
The reality of the beast begins to crystallise, there is only a moment to fire, when the final beast is on the verge of coagulation, the final truth of lamenting almost caught on the hop for a lifetime, on the point of translating liquefication. . .
the pressure of all my life and dreams passes before and after, the median point of the image begins to whiten, spinning again, this time with a slowly expanding white centre expanding I know to vast sizes and comprehensions. . .
Spinning faster but without sense of speed, the doorway to the charge of light growing perceptible and winding down to a brilliance of simulated clarity near the point of vanishing, the magic impulse of the speed of light, grinding the clear vision of approaching the stillness of eternity, the infinitely wound up spring that starts to meld and snap furiously in the ultra slow motion retardment of no time at all. . .
The point of white pushes out relentlessly, the control that lost out in the age of the ancestors, forever lost it seems, forgotten in its sadness, pushes out, it's swirling rapid black and white, black is white and white is black, criss-crossing the mild borders of accusation between the two, no judge will recognise the goodness and the badness in this enigma of expansion. . .
Always larger for eternity, always the small perception dwindling in comprehension above the delicate trace of nothing, a wisp of air blown out in the temple pillars' shade, soon it will envelope everything. . .
We were all lost in the vortex of the swirl, not now, not now please, begging always in the expansion of white pushing the colour now far beyond the field of vision, stretching the eye of the mind but never to breaking point, just the constant point of pain, explicit detail of the the splinter entering eye, shattered blindness burrow deep into the pale green aura of the standing man. . .
Always expanding, not ending still, ever movement, not to think. . .
this is my bullet soaring deeper into the image of the beast, the splinter into the eye and heart of myself, the same, the one and the same, beauty blown double as the hand that wields the gun splits and also clutches at the shredded heart of its doppelganger. . .
And then the explosion, or was it implosion?
Did it start with the white point?

In a second of time-lapse, the temple is in ruins. . .
Rubble everywhere, the man is shattered literally, in pieces of stone lying around, I stand for how long?
Staring at where everything is now not the image, wiped clear and clean, the rain of accelerating dream wash clear the soul's dilemma. . .
the relief, the relief of finally knowing my enemy, how he is, he is destroyed, I turn around. . .
There is Bratsby, but she's older, no longer six years old, but twelve or thirteen. . .
am I older, too?
She is calm, I'm too shocked to feel anything, just to walk away reflecting, silent, passive, the itch of a splinter found by my foot, the glinting darkness of the pressured light sparking blood, the stab of red covering the shard immediately, never to see the look in my eye as I bend down and hesitate to pick up what I've lost. . .
Not noticing really how she leads me carefully and quietly by the arm away from my nemesis, the day of reckoning.

My mirror has shattered, but with it the extreme pain, unbearable every day, of an almost limitless labyrinth of mind beyond my power to recall. . .
The light is calm, we walk slowly away, to the back of the building, out into the street, but the dream quickens, won't hold the street, the set hasn't been built yet, director shouting, the cameras are rolling, you're on, this is your big chance, but you walk on, letting go of my hand, even before you emerge from the stomach, all is lost, the last two fingers touching. . .
I'm sweating, I'm shouting, I'm awake, thinking over and over compulsively this dream has occurred for my mirror to melt into flame. . .
Were you watching, my only one?
Were you the Bratsby and Bunny I love so dearly as the flesh of my very seed in this dream?
Would you stay with me the six years of my suffering, the intense patience of my homecoming?

Seabird:
the dream of impeccable flight

At first, movement across the distant horizon. . .
Just a glow of pink sliding around the view. . .
on top of the building stands a man ready to fly. . .
His wings of plastic moulded firmly to the arms that wave,
uncomprehending the increased heat rising gently above the fields
surrounding the conical shape of the temple. . .
After many minutes the slight breeze begins to tip him forward, running
over the edge of a point to impeccable flight.

I looked for you Seabird everywhere. . .

I wanted to tell you, I'm sorry, but it was inadequate, you were so right with your independent stand against all my unfair arguments. . .
Just as suddenly we are in Rome. . .
This is no daydream, it really happened, my memory tells me. . .
A street in Rome outside the awning of the Hotel Metropole, should I disguise?
Standing sheepish, the holiday snap by a third person. . .
Bobbin, younger sister of Bratsby, a sleepy bundle in the buggy. . .
When the photo arrived, too late to show you as friendship shattered for good, it arrived accusing, with your face obliterated by its natural insistence to be guarded in shadow of the hotel lobby. . .
Turning away, distrustful and intruded upon. . .
so unlike the photo with Webster, triumphantly pregnant, did I mention that?
I was posing nose in the air, attempting to get rid of my double chin, always looking up in photos haha, it's an effect of living with a totally unphotogenic face for so long. . .
The buggy a monstrous symbol of how we don't exist as a family, it was my first turn as a semi-permanent baby-sitter. . .
I remember, on the coach, that long coach taking three days to reach Rome, the being pissed on, Bobbin warm wetness all down my legs, my terror, her calmness, the scuffled sniggers of the mums on board, a little bit of retribution for taking you on for a week. . .
Racing along in the night mile after mile, the shapeless snores of the other passengers as I gazed rapt at your face, silhouette against the plush and plastic tilted seat. . .
Seabird, why were you so beautiful, so conventionally so, with cheekbones like a white squaw, perfect parted lips even when you were unconscious of the gaze?
What are you doing, dreaming of what?
Not the Suit, that would be too bad. . .
of your future Norwegian, did he present himself eager, in astral form, what is it with these fellows of European extraction?
The reflections of the lamps, the lights of the road, multiform, hallucinatory, night-time flickering across our semi-sleeping forms, across the balm of your sculptured cynicism. . .
I want to place my head on the shoulder, you're asleep, it's mad I know, infatuation blah blah. . .
All the coughing in heaven across your silent, mocking brow accuses me of the devil's work, I'm accosted by the flamy pit of morbid desire again and again. . .
then I swim in the smoothness of the fine and silky rhythm of your hair, falling across Bobbin's little snoring head, she's looking still more like the Suit than you. . .

I'm sure that must annoy you, what is it like for a woman to see the hated husband in their child's countenance?
Day after day, for all their bathing it away with soothing influence.

Just then I wondered what I was doing there, one natural step to have said originally “I have a ticket spare, you are the person I want to give the ticket to”. . .
Compassion?
In retrospect, it's as sentimental as 'take me away from all this'. . .
At the hotel a double room with Bobbin, who was I kidding?
Bathing Bobbin while you took your turn at the evening convention, had never washed a baby before. . .
she talked to me for a long time, trusting I hoped, the fact of her trust was cheering anyway, the bathwater was cold. . .
And then you said (before we started off) “I'll come with you on one condition, that you don't get annoyed with me being in the bathroom for hours”. . .
Like mother like daughter, the sanctuary of the steam and soap, the gazing in the mirror until the faced is fixed. . .
the look is immortalised to your satisfaction, the creeping tenderness of the brush drawn across that fine blonde hair, and all for what?
You didn't like the Italian men on the Metro, the sideways leer, the possession of the body wanted and sucked into sight, the opportunity laid out for your inspection, back to the Suit it seemed but in worse shape. . .
One day when I wasn't able to venture into the city with you, your hell on the train as youth slicked back and sinisterly turned its greased head to lick the lip that wanted to torture you slowly. . .
arriving back home at the hotel, breathless. . .
But no solace from me, I'm lost in the reverie of wanting something I can never have, my first child waiting to be born in England, growing inside its foetal dream. . .
does it wonder where I am, the hand that stroked the stomach purely and tenderly?
Right then I waited, but my embrace, however brotherly, would do nothing but scare you, the chaste kiss of light meaning the required reassurance, that's all right, who wants to destroy with desire?
We don't kill the other with kindness, but in infatuation I glossed your back and made you into the dream sister I've never had.

We existed for one week as perfect companions, it could seem like many months if I care to think about it in those terms, time being completely flexible in these epiphanies. . .
Pizzas in the little cafe, the hermetic world of sibling lovers who do not get

beyond the first rung of love, they are happy to stay there. . .
And all through, the slight but relentless pressure of conscience wearing its lovely crown, smoothing my forehead with song. . .
'be sure, be sure'. . .
Were you weighing the alternatives then (I didn't have the courage to ask, then). . .
the dilemma of a woman who is expecting the expectation of repaying the debt of kindliness. . .
No, never to own you was my desire, never to expect anything, although by the concentration in my gaze, the fate of investment in thought was sealed. . .
this is the world out here, it's give and take, the rules of the game are laid out and we are all very displeased if we don't follow them. . .
But then what about the opportunist always stretching the rules without breaking them?
Unflinching sometimes, without the restraint of conscience, or is it that one simply feels guilty about not feeling guilty?
A betrayal of trust rendered harmless by the butterfly syndrome, free to attract without compulsion, without expectation, without commitment. . .
The opportunist's question. . .
how strong is the elasticity of your smile?
What is its breaking, snapping point?
Do I fall under that spell of opportunity?
Even now, just recalling the empathy, the anger and the compassion of friendship?
My warmth, your coolness, an exotic stalemate where I prowl, pursue and you settle quietly, gratefully in your house, these rugs paced out of all proportion (again). . .
the evenings, with their understanding of silence, no need to speak.

But now the bell rings, my dream has five minutes to last, there are 35 years and plenty of adventures to complete, I've left it to the final moment to decide. . .
treading water, can't decide, trying to fly (away), it will catch me, the spectre of time's scaly wings rising above and around me, waiting to envelop and snatch away my breath. . .
Waking up, sweating again, she soothes from ten feet away, the bird of time disappears. . .
No one saves me, lying on the ground unable to move away from myself, the chrysalis of token and locked belief. . .
You are fading. . .
why don't you help me?
And then the dawn, sisters appear one after the other throughout all my years, the variation of you hundred-fold passing by, the whole wanted

world with its secret smile turning the face away in embarrassment. . .
Awake now, you asleep in the next bed, Bobbin close. . .
peaceful. . .
I'm in a strange country with a woman that is you, a child that is also you. . .
I'm lying breathless, without scorn, regard, conscience, duty or love. . .
Waiting for the marble floor to stop its spirallic density uplifting, I remember the mirror of the hundred faces, the squaring of the circle of shattered reflection. . .
it faces me across the downpour of rain, in the garden, before my life, the meeting of the two cells, why my life?
Lying still yet moving. Overhanging the edge of something and slipping. . .
controlling the chance of falling until I'm safe.

So where's the writing here?
Under my hat the stateliest head, wanting to know who you are again. . .
this is memory talking, the fond nostalgia of your beneficence that I only imagined. . .
you were quickly calculating the benefits of a short companionship I supposed, when things got hot, they're too risky, what is this boy up to?
He's confusing the spiritual with the temporal and worse, because of the sensitivity of the human being before him. . .
he's asking too much, a tie in the blood is the least of it, he wants to take her right back to the source of things, Jacob's 'signature of all things' (Boehme/Behmen) no less, I would think, the alchemy of knowing the stagnating clash of primal matter. . .
The alchemy too of infinite regress, the other direction to beyond the two cells, let's mix up the cocktail of genes a little more, bend time and push back the wings so that you can fly free Seabird, from your crushing Suit and his doped-out buddies, it takes two to tango but three to cause a dance-floor confusion, too many arms and legs under Aristophanes' corporate body'n'soul (Plato's 'Symposium' has a lot to answer for). . .
We hadn't even decided to go to the dance-hall we were so nervous. . .
do you ever find it floating through your mind to catch the breath, to memorise the more golden moments of that brevity stretching into meeting?
Trekking to the Coliseum, we saw some friends running and laughing, we couldn't leave our eyes alone, they wanted that scenario (it was foreordained) to briefly cover the attempt to wrestle meaning from the picture moving across the silver screens of desire, the rapture of knowing you are creating your own movie, step by step. . .
And at the last my craziness erupting in poems, stupidities that should have stayed locked in their dungeon. . .

there are unconscious elements of the psyche that are sheer embarrassment when manifested in personal association after all, and they're just as likely to rise to the surface and take us on in fright, not only in dreamtime too, but apparently any time we can be consciously stupid or infatuated enough to allow the passage of. . .
But do we have any say in the matter, ourselves?

I phoned and phoned again, but it was no good. . .
Our week together plus a few hours of talking heart-to-heart visits was all, and that should have been insanely perfect. . .
But it's never enough, desire, desire, I thought I needed those years and other years of fighting, tumbling, caressing, carefree with a sister soul. . .
Now I snatch at the grace in a public phone box and the sisters skim away. . .
so I stand next to the phone, breathing back the gulf that splits reason suddenly and only when I look up do I see the moon, full and a rainbow shining/luminous halo cutting the sky into a square, its sullen scowl puts me in my place straightaway. . .
Luna, you have possessed these endless moments, slowly running through a curving, twisting tunnel to hide from you. . .
but your blue light even reaches me in the labyrinth of distracted mind beyond all mazes, where I run lunatic around and around the hospital corridor full of phone boxes ringing the same and the same tune, the signal of incessant desire that can't be. . .
In the pit of the heart where I return, the half-human without the thread to guide me back out again, you shine even more subtle and purposeful, the purple tinge of the halo's insanity inside the fiery seat of the brain's cortex, a one-dimensional sphere, in which I dwell on the crinkled fulcrum of soul, budded inside, waiting, straining to unfold. . .
Arm on the phone box, steadying, steadying, your twin voices thudding in my ear. . .
A perfect roundness of lunatic influence, padding the corridors hour after hour, shaping up to spill my soul as I am naked within your clawed grasp. . .
Luna and the Seabird floating on the currents, serene in the blue evening. . .
I lean against the box, it sways delicately, the terraced street inside the phone as an accordion shaking with melody. . .
staring out to sea, there is an island rising slowly and majestically out of the water, its fields a glistening green, their foetal gasps erupting from the womb of its sea, the treetops waving, sodden, unwrapped from the chrysalis, and man's own temple already built within the waves. . .
A stick or spot on top of the cone, waiting to fly, my moments of indecision between being born and flying from that building are compressed to one

point and then expanded at the speed of something like light(ness), the 29 years of living thus far encoded in the stretching of the wings ready for flight. . .
The flying man lectures my desire, he waits before talking with growing impatience, silence is the thing now. . .
He looks out over the seas and watches as the figure on the beach runs to him. . .
it can't swim, but dashes into the water anyway. . .
the phone box shatters into splinters, some of which catch in his hair, but when he hits the water, they float away, he has no use for them now, he swims even though he can't swim, he is almost Leander. . .
But always in the dream he knows he cannot make it to the island, the flier takes off and soars in impeccable flight, so that I have to wake up, since we cannot dream of perfection in any shape or form, we make do with the dross elements compensating for their shoddiness only up to a point. . .
Only our desires can be imperfect enough to take shape within the winding labyrinth. . .
My flying must finish, these wings of wax must dissolve, I can only watch you circling, diving, completely independent and unconcerned wheeling away along the coast, back to your home, lost as a speck in the threatening sky.

Cavalier:
scholars and gentlemen

My dear Cavalier. . .
You know I promised to write you about the progress of 'Mirrorgames' as you so charmingly suggested I should call this crumb of confidence that you have instilled. . .
Well, as you read this shaky text, it becomes, magically, a splinter of that mirror itself. . .
I need not pretend to you the arbitrary and contingent nature of the text as it veers into itself during the process of the act of writing. . .
You demonstrated the genius for deconstruction only too well in your own adventure. . .
How can I describe the fortune of synchronicity when being given the room opposite in the cell-block at Roehampton, an accident of alphabet clustering, a plurality of reasons not in the normal scheme of things?
But now after ten months of that crazy course (more anon) I'm missing already our little all night chats, the Benson'n'Hedges vapours hanging overhead, intermingling with the cheap tea, prerequisites for all your serious clowning. . .
So how could I but begin this latest investigation of the smashed mirror without consulting you across the ethers so to speak, the airwaves bent silly with the fantastic message I pass from myself, from the heartland of this desire, to another member of that Circle, whose only aim is to subside from the mighty attachment of destiny's swordpoint not to stab for that heart?

You know of course that you're the only male character in this book, although my father's cameo appearances might squeeze in, there are some mildly amusing episodes from extreme youth about mirrors and cameras that might not be too far out of place. . .

But altogether stretching the point, if only for the simple fact that you are on that photographic wavelength anyway, I've seen your wonderful evocations of the Welsh railway system as it is wound down, of faces turned in upon themselves, of dilations, of slagheaps, of beautiful mouldering engines slumped magnificent and rusting in old sidings. . .
I won't disagree with your predilections for exactly the same marvels on the plate as my old Dad. . .
Cavalier, not only are you the only male, I myself am only a brother strictly speaking, you are the only one with a real name, what could be better than your own surname for existence as regards your penetrating concentration in reading my little crumb?
Your unique position as encourager. . .
And encouragement is perhaps the only experience to have constant relevance for me. . .
of being encouraged, given heart literally, by those who have chosen not to spoil me overmuch. . .
You know, as I enter this second hour of Mozart, at 10.30 pm in Gurnard, on a hot June night, this summer of ringing heat, with coffee in hand, coffee for me Cavalier, not the Typhoo syndrome, that's too ghastly a taste for my own buds, the rank and slimy film of tannin coating the tongue and throat. . .
I cannot help but be astounded at the fact that I hoped to tuck you away into a few paragraphs originally. . .
yes, my main inspiration for restarting this text after so many months blah blah. . .
But now it becomes obvious that I could probably find more splinters reflecting your good self in this glass than almost anybody else. . .
But you won't take over, will you?
Since that would alter the whole course of my precious obsession with the sister. . .
And yet, what a fitting and colossal conclusion that would be, to be finally weaned from that recurring dream on to the absolute charm of simply writing. . .
Did that happen to you after your 'Letters to Sylvie', old chap?
At this point I must confess that this letter format cannot wash for me. . .
I know who Sylvie was, but in order to bless the dear reader with this crucial piece of knowledge, I'm going to have to pretend that you don't know. . .
I can almost hear the Cavalier 's cry from Chigwell Essex, in full flow. . .
“leave it out” you're saying, “leave it out”, with an emphasis line under it. . .
Chigwell, the domicile of the Cavalier generations, where Mum waits for her son to
re-appear after assaults on the superb working life of the city, his agency work, his nocturnal ramblings and scribblings. . .

the life of tea and cigarettes, the distillations of magnetic prose which pour out forthwith. . .
the immediacy of true philosophy. . .
The long and varied line of admirers wending their erratic way to the Roehampton teachers' residence door B6, seeking advice, comfort, a purpose for their efforts and effects, a very few to share their own realisations and epiphanies, most of them unaware of your withdrawal after it was murmured, crudely and inadequately, that you were emotionally unstable. . .
What a kick in the teeth to absolutely no avail, appalling. . .
The teaching carries on in silence, if it is banned in public, the tradition rolls forward. . .
it will not be mastered by a set of shapeless eggs in high places declaring a curfew on aggressive creativity. . .
Anyway the few paragraphs ideas has blown, somehow in the next number of pages, however many it finally amounts to, I've got to dredge up that most intangible of substitutes for reality, nostalgia, fond nostalgia at that (rather than moping, ha) and try to explain what is meant by the Circle, what is meant by mirror-image, what is meant by the awful intimacy of the Three. . .
You did a runner on the last day of the course, well actually it was yesterday come to think about it, seems to be a month ago, are you fighting shy of goodbyes too?
Hawkeye was only marginally slower off the mark there. . .
What happened in your heart as you left that place where so much had crystallised for us all?
Perhaps one incident will suffice to tell our dear readers of some of the insane synchronicity of that moving surface of time. . .
The fact within your consciously celibate year, Imogen proposed sweet marriage to you, on the very last evening, straight out of the air, and in one lazy second you accepted, as if it were merely the second half of a line in a blank verse play. . .
You trod down the raging reptile of ordinariness and without hesitation assented, what is it that answers so easily and surely in that situation?
A woman you've hardly known, perhaps that's the reason, and can I work back throughout the period I've known and observed, in later mirrors, in later splinters?
I do not want to make it a mission to recover everything, or to re-cover either, it's the most stultifying obsession, to want everything, the way one wants it. . .
Instead I will cavalierly select only those that surface with the irrationality of magic that only the truly deep elements of the psyche, those that rise with the swiftness of ecstasy and despair both. . .
What do you say Cavalier, the only 'you' that I don't dream about, what do

you say about this collaboration?
The momentum of my obsession spins regardless of time and place, does yours?

Puffin:
guilt by the canoe lake

Mozart on the turntable again, as I write to you now from Gurnard, a respectable little village suburb on the right side of town. . .
the Volvos and the Citroens lined up in un-neat rows collecting the children from school. . .
Am I correct in supposing I can continue this narrative, which is definitely unsuburbanlike in content and manner, here in the heart of domesticity?
To you, back in memory some 14 years, where are you now Puffin?
Four years since I saw you last, holding the new being that you call your baby, finally an outlet for all that trapped energy of accord, how did you manage that one?
More anon but don't worry, in the end I will vindicate you, sweetest sister. . .
no I can't carry that burden of righteousness any further, it stinks so much even out here in sanitised land, don't throw up at the back there.

Mozart, a good surface Catholic, don't turn in your limepit for me, I'm not worth the anguish. . .
And Puffin, you're the 'you' in this case, the splinter that's quite a large fragment really, one that is easily identifiable in the smashed mirror of my dreamtime. . .
This flash of glass illumines, is mystical in its intensity to the sensate touch, forgoes all contact with the tangible to exert the strangest influence on the collected psyche known as my heart. . .
All through that first long winter together, we were identical twins in our tiny bed-sit in downtown suburban Southsea. . .
you all know what I mean dear readers, do I really have to spend your patience and mine in trying, in a few densely packed, yawnable paragraphs try to set down what it is about these places that grates on the nerves, dampens the ardour of life to be lived, encroaches on the swan's song of the present moment, to intrude?
Anyway it's all between the lines, anxious and aggrieved, in Larkin's 'Mr Bleaney', and a lot of you out there know that one by heart, in spirit if not in letter. . .
except if it's your own soul sister you're setting up home with, the sordidness of that type of exile crumples double on the mind. . .
An upper working-class upholstery of 40 years previously, filtered by the slick morbidity of veneered plastic, in coffee tables, in useless wardrobes that don't hold very much, in all the delicacies of actual living life ruined, petrified, literally turned to stone in some cases. . .
dampness, mustiness, the acrid smell lingering faintly of others' fastidiousness. . .
Having to keep clean, keep safe, keep sane in this jungle of soft suburbia. . .
still the almost imperceptible aroma of old after shaves, furniture polish, stains in the wood irredeemable. . .
Genteel, I think the word is for those particular type of landladies who never show their husbands, although mentioning them often, dropping their names into the contractual gossip like the touch of threatening dismissal, pulsating insinuation of absent strength gone limp somewhere. . .
The husbands, perhaps they're too busy earning money, or reeling from exhaustion after a lifetime squandered in providing for this very same half-widow existence, or have they been genteelly put to sleep by the onslaught of the soft, libellous tongue?
The quick, snatched gossip stretched out eventually to a lovingly long ramble over cups of tea and digestive biscuits to a friend, an informant, an aside, a collaborator in the vile trade of conversations with no content, just the morse code chime of passing the slow time. . .
And I am bolstering your sort of house of cards, with only one winner, the enormous hand of death which claps out of the sky one sunny or rainy day

with its announcement of surprise to you all, mincing landladies of my middle youth. . .
We've already talked about Edwards Road, let's open another can of worms, it's good for my health, at least to kick over the traces with a bit of confrontational confession, burning the bridges with some sidelong excursions into the netherworld of my astral long-term memories. . .
We moved through a few crummy rooms that winter, and froze and froze with electric meters that ate our money raw, we couldn't feed them enough, the little wittering bastards. . .
What did we do to deserve those meters, darling?
We ourselves ate from the tree of a six-month romance, we didn't need to say I love you, we were one soul for that time, there was no pursuer and pursued, no need to say anything, although of course we talked our heads off all the time, or at least I did, the original buttonholer, Melville's original 'Confidence man', brimming with it, schemes and stratagems for the mind. . .
And stretching and stretching the point until one of us always had to burst, and it was invariably you my sister who did the bursting, or the flexibility, the accommodation, all those euphemisms for giving up. . .
thus I was always too busy being Mr Smartass, always right, and you always had to say yes, didn't you?
Although the answer “no” sometimes was given, I must have ignored it, I suppose. . .
An incident, dear reader?
General reader, that impossible creature, desires an incident?
Are you listening out there as well in Chigwell, Cavalier?
They want an incident, something to fix the hopeless unconcentrated mind on, attention spans diminishing by the minute in our atrophied world. . .
some sort of event, human situation, love interest and so on and so forth. . .
What could be more human than waffling away in a seedy bed-sit in suburbia while falling in love, falling?
Well I'm dredging the old memory, sorry to take so long, you know how we writer chaps long for the perfectly crystallising, cataclysmic event that will capture the hearts and imaginations of the punters, as well as the pocket-book of some publisher crazy enough to print we avant-garde poseurs. . .
Well all right, I give in, you've got what you wanted. . .
the in-laws. . .
ah wondered when I was coming to that little nest of vipers, did you?
It's the Jewish connection, we're heading for a little impasse, where I'm bound to be thinking. . .
what shall I tell them about the controversial cultural implications?
Myself, a white Prot boy, agnostic without the 'a', right down to the 'heart's deep core' as Bill Blake would have it. . .

One of the first talks we had was when going over on the old ferry to the Island, when we did the romantic thing and leaned over the rail that very starry night, the little winsome light gyrating with intense fervour on the water as the boat prepared to pull out, or whatever the word is. . .
Warning, very slow on the nautical terms, no descriptions of sailing in this long writing, so goodbye all you yachting enthusiasts out there. . .
Shimmering they were, the little lights dancing on the water from reflected moonlight. . .
My memory becomes a dream at this point and we time-lapse to 2 am, middle of the night, sitting on a bench near the Canoe (boating) Lake, still in Southsea. . .
we're so scared we don't return to your Edwards Road ratpit, we sneak around the seaside part of town getting colder and colder. . .
But suddenly we aren't afraid because we're like the good brothers and sisters, we're realising that we share the secret familiar to them all from Hansel and Gretel onwards. . .
More of Gretel in several mystical splinters of mythic remembrance of the mirror later. . .
She's “the-rapist” from Hawkeye when I rove the glance over those Catholic guilt shards. . .
(note for the non-cognoscenti, my Friend's one-time counsellor, therapist, one of a breed for which Hawkeye had no truck). . .
We're sitting on the bench anyway, what should you start talking about (this is after the saucepan incident, you'll recall) but why it's different for Jewish girls to go out with goy boys. . .
yes 'goy', it's a curious insult in a large pantheon of graded Jewish humour insult and self- caricature (really the put-down on someone else, I should have told you this was complicated stuff'n'nonsense, dear reader). . .
must seem withering to those with a more sensitive coat of personality. . .
I'm charmed, it's like an amulet I can wear to ward off all the Jew Liliths of this world. . .
a goy, it's an exile type of word, therefore one that appeals to me particularly. . .
a rabid and maudlin sort of epithet, anyway it means 'outside the faith' or some such, of course you've guessed that. . .
But as with the saucepan caper, your discourse on that night rings hollow, it's like you're acting in a play where the two main characters are cross-talking, their glances both directed towards the middle distance, waffling away in complete oblivious disregard, but here I was all attention, your eyes glued to the past, or was it the future?
Acting in a play, you've learnt the lines immaculately, but secretly you don't believe, you're not in accord with the writer, in fact you don't know who it is, not even the name, you think the playwright was God, or the divine humbug, and now you're going to have to get out there on that silent

and expectant stage, third or fourth night, and knock'em silly with a bravura performance, except you're all dried up with suppressed grief about the part that you're playing, the one imposed on you by the family, the culture, those farts of the deserts croaking croaking your hidden name so suddenly in their parched and lonely ancestral sleep. . .

And there's some cynic out there in the audience, in the second row, some wag, some prankster review writer from punch or Private Eye, who's not taking it so seriously, that's me (a little hint) in this present scenario I'm spieling out to you Puffin, and anyone else mad enough to swing along with it. . .

And it's been you dear reader in various moments of your existence, various hours of experience so that you can relate to these golden exile situations yourself. . .

patrolling the airwaves of your etheric subsidy, of your perceptive little minds when they don't really believe in the words, but they want desperately to believe in the actor, because the voice of the actor instills fear and confidence, hammering home the faith in tragedy and comic relief. . .

Not the playwright paradoxically. . .

they're doing all right, they've got rid of the slimy thing, the creative idea, not least the reptilian Jewish patriarch long-bearded thing that cackles yahweh behind its hand in a gleeful aside to its sidekick atrophy. . . basking in the reflected glory of their drivelling stage directions, assimilating the effects, the attempts of these poor actor fellows to appropriate the leavings, the crusts, the second-hand experiences, the scraps, the fragments, the spilt milk, the splinters.

And now Mozart arrests me, after the String Quartet, now it's a very melancholy piano sonata, I won't give you the number in case you want to match the mood as it were, and that will never do, we've tried that one before with Mahler and Bruckner haven't we kiddies, and it didn't work, did it?

(When in doubt insult the reader, and I am in grave doubt). . .

No, so don't sit there imagining magic space encompassed with cosmic thoughts of mixed media, despite what the Observer told you last week in its London supplement ahem. . .

Won't wash with me pals, this is my exorcism thank you very much, you choose your own music for yours. . .

Anyway we're on the bench, another hour flies by, bodies colder and colder, hearts nicely warmed up by the metaphysics of goyness. . .

and I say something like what's the difference anyhow. . .

I'm extolling the virtues of the steady romantic feeling and so forth, which you knew was right (just say yes, dear, but you don't). . .

what have you got to back up the argument, is it logical?
I'm to learn in the next five years there isn't a scrap of what any philosopher (or anybody else, for that matter) would call formal logic in these Jewish pronouncements, the orthodox side of your psyche. . .
just hogwash distilled to a fairy story, or was it the other way round?
Sometimes, like an optical illusion of the cultural mind, it can seem both at once. . .
If you hadn't told me you were Jewish, would that have made any difference?
Ah yes, but that guilt dives a long way deeper. . .
we're going to be hearing a lot more of that simple syllable, guilt I mean, in the next slab of text. . .
Its accumulated effect through the sisters' collective memory. . .
through the years, decades even, nay the centuries of reflection upon the self-indulgence of the soul's attache-case will become apparent through ritual, through the heart's so-called desire and so on and so forth blah. . .
This means mother would never approve, sorry, Momma with a capital M. . .
Mother/schmother I felt like saying, and would continue to feel. . .
the kind of patter I was to become skilled at, did you notice?
And then. . .
The father, what about your Dad?
I chimed in, reluctant, because maybe that was a bigger Pandora's box. . .
Three or four days later you started the narrative of Dad and in one of those experiences when I was never really sure whether I should have kept my trap shut or not, it seemed so essential for you to confess it, and I use the word advisedly, all you raving lapsed Catholics out there. . .
Can I hear you faintly cheering sardonically in Chigwell?
Your father, a little man, worn down to a messy pulp of a has-been taxi driver by what seemed like a dragon of a wife (this is your mother). . .
How could anyone as sweet as you have a mother like that?
In my bench reverie I communed with that common soul of mothers-in-law, the butt of a million music-hall jokes. . .
the cow, the battleaxe, the dragon, the beard, the trousers ad nauseam. . .
But Dad the original beaten down man, visited secretly by you Puffin, you loved him wisely I think, and you hated your Momma for what she had caused him to suffer, because of his neglect of the opulent lifestyle, not enough money, not enough status, oi vay we all have our cross to bear, wrong religious metaphor there I think. . .
Your Momma with her sidekicks Uncle Bernie and I can't remember the other's name, they would tut-tut. . .
And who replaced the man kicked downstairs?
Why smarmy 'uncle' Sid who ran a handbag (sorry, accessories) shop in Wealdstone, nearly next to mother Edie darling (knitwear and sewing requisites my life). . .

Oh yes, I met uncle Sid many times, God rest your greasy soul Sidney, the corporal trying to look like the colonel, the reasonable man, oh so reasonable with the smile that wasn't so winning, trying to win friends and affluence people so to speak. . .
You didn't steal my heart away baby Sid and you certainly flung the shit on the fan with Puffin. . .
for three or four years he tried the inexpert con-man's tricks on her until there was no choice, he was there, in situ, the pretender in the castle and that's a fact. . .
Between home and Dad, hiding the old emotions, repressing things deeper and deeper, watching that poor little man die and die of a broken heart and congealing pride, a broken life, nothing considered right enough to offer, one rusty chain waiting to slip its link and perish the whole ship, the whole existence. . .
and he found it, heart attack at forty-something, you didn't even know his age you grieved so much. . .
I caught it full on the rebound, on the smartness a couple of years after the bench, and it pulled me up. . .
Well I didn't get on with my Dad, but that was just a communication problem (we're still working on it, another book ha) but here was severance, bereavement, complete antipathy of mother and daughter. . .
nag nag, shout shout shout, excuse me I'm leaving and I won't be back until you pay for what you've said and I don't care. . .
But darling don't go, think of uncle Sid and all he's done, how he's really tried to help and all you can do is run away again and again and cause us so much heartache and worry (and expense), just think of what you're doing to your poor Momma, if you don't think of me, remember your family. . .
The family my arse I thought, while listening to this incredible tale, much too complicated to repeat. . .
go out and marry a neurotic Jew and you'll spend half a lifetime trying to unentangle, find out the details for yourself, the backbiting, squabbling, tragedies, atonements and general hogwash. . .
Well it certainly turned around my view, I always thought they were a persecuted race full stop, but I was wrong, it's never that simple. . .
the sweat poured off me in surprise that night, even more so now as I commit it in tablets of quick-dissolving jelly, ahem stone. . .
What I can't recall is what happened immediately after the bench. . .
I was probably in such a quandary metaphysically, know what I mean?
Did you really tell me the whole story there and then, or is the essence of the tale foreshortened in memory so that I telescope all the fragments together in one long dribble of confession?
I don't think you did somehow. . .
maybe some weeks later when we finally started living in goy sin, when my

smooth seductive platitudes eventually soothed those shattered cultural nerves enough. . .
so I'm not going to tell the details, you general reader types from Hackney to Hampshire are going to have to find out for yourselves. . .
Go marry someone from a different culture with guilt writ large in their constitution and you'll be able to fill in between the lines, between the sheets even. . .
this is just a side-issue mirror shard really for the true novel reader who's only interested in say, sex/politics/football god bless 'em. . .
Anyway that's the cultural message over with for today. . .
Next stop the wedding, yes now that's always an interesting and fascinating incident, usually the denouement (of a 'comedy' anyhow), for some characters to bend their 19th century novel-selves around, an essential event in any self-respecting text. . .
Okay My Hoity-toity Robbe-Grillet and his minions at the back there sneering?

The Collective unconscious:
levitation in Gurnard

NB musical note for all you assorted music-background buffs. . .
current musak obsession and guidance Steve Reich the American contemporary outpourer, and his 'Music for 18 musicians', a certain stab in the light for pulsing heartbeat body/mind musics held in splendid suspension above disbelief, accruing natural containers of joy in current shaping, long live the pulse. . .
Well I've got the breath, got the pulse myself. . .
let me commit to paper machine. . .
Typewriter, what have you meant or do you mean to me?
I can go on steadily for maybe a long time, but the urgency steals over me like the shadow of a gigantic bird's wings that will evolve in the future of our journeys and destinations. . .
What happened when I flew from the temple myself?
I can tell up to a point, because I'm still in the air, floating/cruising/gliding with the currents invisible. . .
How can I tell you what it means to be slowly released from my false hold upon myself that was projected on to you?
In all the years I've gazed, half-understood, waited in vain for the dream-sister, through all the various shatterings of mirrors past, present and future, I've given to myself the easy self-portrait of either justification or hyposcrisy, nice'n'easy opposites and paradoxes, knowing that the complex truth was unattainable by intellect, even though that intellect convinced itself (me?) that it was the perfectly complex foil of life. . .
Mostly truths, uncoinable currencies of ecstasy and despair, over a matter that might simply be resolved by the mere dedication of a scrap of paper, or a word in the ear of the right listener. . .
No longer the exile's freezing wait beyond the city walls of self and community, someone hears me inside the gates, can I cry loud enough?
But they think they can keep me out a while longer till my presence becomes no more than a wisp of the wind. . .
Yet I'm flying far above those walls now, am circling, I can hardly see the laid-out plan of the streets, the necessary alleyways and obscure angles of intersections, for the wind blowing right through me in this new sensation of all sensations. . .
In my dream that I know is prophecy I am flying, at last taking off for the

first impeccable flight alone, as mentioned in the 1983 self-poem (included later for your perusal, don't make me forget it). . .
this is the moment when fiction, fantasy and waking reality fuse in their immaculate and seamless perversity. . .
Awake now, I'm living and breathing, stretching to beyond all mannerisms and occult reasonings, the past forgotten, the future still expanding, the houses and fields of my astral cityscape have always been there, no beginning or end. . .
But still, incredibly, developing in the personal. . .
the tautness of the balance between inhalation and exhalation, breathing in life and spitting out death, how can we manage to miss it in all our desires and ambitions?
As we walk this life with pride and a little blindness, just enough to pronounce our measure on things and people. . .
enough to create the illusion (not allusion) that we really matter, somehow. . .
we do, but only as the spark of a once mighty fire, which in its miraculous embers becomes truly alive once more in our efforts to understand the deep core of the heart's one desire, and it ain't Aristophanes, I've told you before and doubtless I'll bore you to death with it before the finishing of this text. . .
What have I got to show for 36 years of roaming the earth, committing acts and events and dreams to memory-store, just for your benefit?
To let it go again, that's all. . .
to surrender and and allow these crumbs of confidence to disperse in actuality. . .
To fly away from night and expect the rigours of the sun's heat not to melt the waxen wings. . .
Not content with upturning the myth of the prideful flight, I'm not measuring the usual obsessions with time, specifically hours around the little clock, which have tied so unmercifully the fraught self against its own intimidations. . .
In Gurnard, 2nd July 1989 I write these commiserations that are more than miseries, on to the sheets for you. . .
The women shining in the splinters of self-mirror, be free at last in the vision of least self, go in peace through your perception of my dreamlife, as I may be that third or fourth angel of Dante's version of purgatory who, through a slight brush of wind and wing on the soul-climbing terraces of repentance, eradicates the lead-weights of desires and non-communications one by one, lighter and lighter they ascend until they can fly themselves above the pinnacle of earthly attachment. . .
Don't worry, Prot readers, no conversion tactics here, but just a slight nod to that provider of excellence Mr Aligheri. . .
Who can tell just what the crossover points of his narrative mean to the

modern reader and writer?
I say keep him, read him, for it says something in its tight-arsed RC mediaeval vocabulary about our tortured and tortuous state today, thanks Dante. . .
One more fleck of recognition in my dream until no longer recognisable, the streets of the New Jerusalem are lost in the spiny backwoods of once more memory, her waving tentacles of nostalgia slowly disengaged, at rest. . .
The Fates may cut the ropes, but we will all be beyond them. . .
will you collect the splinters of my vision disinterestedly, my Fate?

Hawkeye:
catching the breath

Hawkeye and Sparrow, the young sister and the older sister. . .
Hawkeye, you are eight years younger than me, Sparrow eight years older, a symmetry of mad age particulars I cannot help but relish in my median self-absorbed state of mirror hunting. . .
You both shine so brightly in those splinters which are even now forming around your radiant crystalline features. . .
the most photogenic of all sisters, you throw back an intense embarrassment of my own mordant uncontrolled austerities. . .
Hawkeye, you once said I looked like a sad Nixon with my two-day beard. . .
thus I winced and even blushed as your Hound-boy chafed on his leash, the untimely Puck- on-leash, thanks Cavalier for that nickname, really called Ben, the boy of 27 who lived downstairs, slavering with puppydog lost lust, shiny wet eyes and nose giving off the sweat of doggy delight, tongue lolling. . .
Hawkeye though, that year a miracle of synchronistic vision, when once you understood what it was that I wanted so much from you. . .
Still avoiding the fraternal contact, but wariness does not become you. . .
yes, synchronicity will crop up with you. . .
The only one of the sisters to know what Dr Carl (Jung) meant by this and you lived it to the full, even looked for it in your oblique way. . .
which in the Catholic rules of the game is considered underhand, if not downright
naughty. . .
Such a relief now, to express the bond of affection on paper, since our goodbyes were solemn and sad, even non-existent it might be suggested. . .
In all contacts your fake directness, my own elliptical evasions clouding your face and embarrassing your target of my mind's lens disrupted by

the distorted 3 am maudlin sentimentality (more on these middle of the night conversations later, winding ellipses and opposite directness clashing and smoothing together under the fat moon waxing and waxing still). . .
You cursed me often, over and above the call of Eastend duty, for my invisible weapons of brokenhearted defence against my own weakness. . .
looking for dreamsister companionship where none really existed. . .
did you always reckon on it being that way?
A throwback to your past agrophobia, you told me often at the 3 am time, aged 13 to 22 you said. . .
I was so active in those 1980s, in my proactive twenties. . .
setting up shops, voluntary evangelism about food, meditation, you name it. . .
And you allegedly were burning the mid-day oil in a pit of bedsit infested phobias, stagnation and complete relation to Hardy's 'Tess'. . .
Ah many a young maiden and so forth, but you increasingly unlike a maiden. . .
We never got around to talking about that time, during the endless blathering sessions, did we?
And your aged father, that was even more peremptory than the Puffin account, is it something I set up in my rush to be the older brother?

As we met so I will describe and then let the scribbles I sent to you formerly tell the story in their broken rhymes and rhythms. . .
But as a lover of the moral reply, you will understand if I stretch the true account so far as to make it not worthwhile to be so detached, who cares now anyway?
Will you catch your breath, as you thought you might, years from now when those messages/poems/postcards/idiocies in general topple out of your scrapbook/folder/diary/pile of memorabilia, on to the open floor of your temptations?
And there will you stop a second to pick up the tiny fragments and splinters of my regard?
Catching your breath, but not measuring. . .
That night you told me that you were not afraid of anything, even mortality. . .
months later guffawing your deep, horsey laugh outright in my face as you poured scorn on my pathetic construction. . .
well I'd thought about it for weeks originally, it had been a vital part of my thoughts. . .
How can anyone not be afraid of mortality?
But I reckoned without your slippery version of communicating true meanings. . .
not being afraid, but there was fear, massive fear, involved, a different

category in your opinion, I couldn't see the difference. . .
But this fear was nebulous, unworthy of too much attention on your part, it wasn't something that got you through the day, through the sales-talk, through the notes of confidence scrawled on the wall, 'I am a generous, warm-hearted, aggressive person' and so on. . .
Well anyway, little personal angst evident, you derided it in others, particularly me, who seemed filled with it (absolutely correct ha) and still I tried to box it in with my own simplistic notions of collective unconscious. . .
In other words you were acting, superbly. . .
seamlessly.

How come I don't dream about you any more, Hawkeye?
Well once I did, perhaps just the once. . .
we were discussing what your Catholic heaven would look like and I ventured to suggest that the walls would be lined with pistachio nuts (a favourite consummation of yours) wondering what would lie behind the food, mirrors perhaps?
A tender, yet complete, revelation of your spirit or personal power?
Nah you wouldn't have it, but I woke up and blabbered about your case, severe embarrassment. . .
nothing neo-hippy cosmic with you Hawkeye, just the immediate and insistent praise or blame in the present moment and your delicious way of subverting my gaze away from you. . .
Look at her, you'd say, not me. . .
Imogen did you mean?
You certainly enjoyed the gaze of men. . .
but spat them out at regular and refreshing intervals as so much grist to the mill, your unholy exhalations. . .
Of pipedream masculinity, distorted and made purgatorial by your distilled, smoky and sweaty breath. . .
Me, the awkward customer among the pantheon of nerds, not sold on your curve of ingratitude, still hooked on the poetic after all these months, not brought down to the metaphor of selling to explain every link of communication and exchange. . .
am I just plain stupid?
You'd say a considered yes, or an opinion that felt repulsed from immaculate conceit. . .
no, just a pratfall coming soon, the memory of breathing my healing spells in and out of your rosy mouth, the taut but expandable lines around the edges of that mouth, the Rosicrucian delight the corners adjusted to a faint smile of knowing the world. . .
That you were so unsure of, but which gave the touch of maturity to your blessed damosel image that was curative, that spelled out relief from

the danger of recognising your manipulations to be absolutely and certainly true. . .
Were you working on me from afar when that first real confrontation took place?
You were shocked that I was a gentler spirit, nobody you had known or knew treated your arbitrary sign of spirit in that way, you had the broken ribs to prove it from the Welshbag you were sparring with for seven years. . .
who was it, Doug, Darren, Trevor?
Can't remember. . .
Some of the agrophobia in that particular timescale, made to measure for later flaunting of the spirit. . .
Your splinter of glass sticks out from the mirror in open invitation to remember, but it's such a short time since our departure, what am I to make of it, the temptation, the warning, the subterfuge, the manipulation?
You were one of the Circle it's true, and the first meeting reflected that powerful trio once, blazed out like a branding iron almost. . .
across my forehead saying claimed claimed claimed by the three, was there witchery afoot?
Sorcery assembled in its deviancy across the inner sky at that point?
Ho ho Cavalier chortling disconsolately in nether Chigwell, your explanation as I remember was. . .
you told her to be kind to me, we were made for each other you later informed me. . .
but more than kindness was involved and since silken nets are not available as metaphors these days, nor chains, I must settle for a sort of optic fibre down the world's throat, never entangled with the tubes of body, my 'veiny pipes' as Bill Blake would have it (in 'Jerusalem'). . .
Traces of the death of the soul you tried to tell me about at the party of sleaze where it all took place, Cavalier. . .
in your rambling monologue of heroics, that death of the soul writ in the small print of your pronouncement, of present yet nearly immanent cause and effect of the embarkation across the last and fateful river. . .
The Circle as it is forged and immediately nudged on around the the spirallic journey of selves towards a new and deeper understanding of this trauma called 'following existence'. . .
Cavalier, I remember six hours through that night holding us in thrall, listening to your own obsessions of second world war planes and bombings, various Russian states and Polish matrices push-pulling their way across your supposed tortured conscience (sorry, consciousness) and Hawkeye the horsey laugh, agreeing yet in strict opposition, freewheeling and at the same time tied to your affection with threads destined to snap any moment, any moment. . .
Hawkeye, your continual diet of red wine, Edith Piaf, Billie Holliday, crooning

and spooning, the abject cruise of the French distaste for a particular Anglo-Saxon brutal rationalism. . .
Oh yes and packaged cultural memories of the Resistance and all it stood for, but you didn't have a clue really, it was acting all the way, sublimely yet still treading the boards, refectory mode we will call it later ha. . .
Everybody else got bored or drunk, or both and settled into the comfy, knowable groove (or rut) of party. . .
but this was no ordinary get-together, the clothes and image of you are burnt right in here, my knowing place, where it both hurts and pleases. . .
Hawkeye, your both eyes glinting and glittering in the dark to enable me to see through them and glance at what compassion I needed to fully take on the brother role.

Your name had been given before birth by a mother who so wanted a boy that you became one in effect, and still are in those trousers given by brother. . .
you became transformed in them, from dressed to kill to sloppy joe tomboy. . .
That you know full well. . .
Your physical brother, but he's 13 years older than you. . .
even older than I am fer chrissakes, with his LP collection of Hendrix and the Who, r'n'b Richmond and Putney way, knows the stuff, straight as a Catholic die can be. . .
But the Eel Pie trip was also Cavalier's. . .
the Circle achieves an incestuous statement in this and many other coincidences, talismans, correspondences and so forth. . .
But mother had three miscarriages between brother and you, she was 41 years old at your birth, you were the last gasp at the manchild stakes, this one meant to be saintly special. . .
you a longer shot than even I was, a kindred spirit in the club of nervous wombs, where so many delicacies are finally and incurably gened, chromosomed and armed to the bacterial teeth with enough special imagery to drown the post-natal titanic of crowded soulbirth. . .
a canal infested with the already dead and dying, as well as the yet-to-be-paraded souls and so on. . .
The last gasp as brother, and I'm supposed to see you instead as the most radiant sister, know what I mean and leave it out, you are never going to be anyone's Beatrice, unless. . .
The play of the future will shine but that's another fragment, how can you live your life out beyond agrophobia?
You have unleashed instead a maelstrom of self-confidence, called indeed by the rest of the Circle wickedly the Refectory Mode, since it was flaunted most obviously and publicly in the seedy canteen of our course

(no references to rival your much more gloriously seedy BBC canteen of 'Sylvie', Cavalier though).

But what of the spark, electricity of the bird of prey's vengeance, Hawkeye?
Not once but many times, you affrighted with the piercing glint. . .
of passion, of fond (not useless and self-indulgent) nostalgia. . .
not for you the plodding memory of reflection, but an instant catching of the breath. . .
But since one cannot ultimately suspend breath without keeling over, you very sensibly stick to that one mode of remembering that counts, the transient one. . .
Therefore I can be released from some sort of literary stagefright by knowing that, properly, my text will never interfere with whatever is currently spinning in your social life, or even life of the mind or spirit. . .
I'm singing to an empty landscape, wherein this particular splinter shows no solitary bird wheeling and diving and floating on air to focus my admittedly roving thoughts, unconcentrated. . .
You are not given to be an object of continual contemplation, even in a flitting sort of way. . .
This is your image on my psychic retina, a speck in the sky, a luminous point, unique and passing away, for me to possibly await the return after migration. . .
One more winter to wait and then all will be changed once more. . .
the Circle will either be broken or not. . .
your saintliness be completely submerged in your notion of sin or vice versa, as your own destiny awaits, her own eye far outshining yours, the glare reflected from her shears glinting stubbornly in the moonlight.

Sparrow:
first three poems of avalanche

Dear Sparrow, the story of an avalanche. . .
A dream of 'orchids, blue-souled, blue-veined', peering from the cracks in rocks. . .
absorbed in song, I noticed their passing resemblance to a recurring dream of struggling up a cliff face. . .
Such flowers out of their context in the desolate mountain places of the unconscious, strewn with glowing rocks, boulders, stones that have been tricked into dreadful animation. . .

A 'framework of boulders, just a shout away from the avalanche', dare I speak the language of sisterhood, when I might disturb the delicate balance of sound, apparent in the thin air that we find difficult to breathe wholeheartedly?
My stretched mind 'growing more and more ominous' in its limbo. . .
it's hopeful but 'beyond the reach' of sensible acquisition. . .
The realisation that it has never known the true power. . .
'the rarity of the motion-always-still', the rocking conundrum of breathing existence. . .
Well over and 'arching behind the trail', a last point of reference for us. . .
we are 'walking, walking' together, but 'back to who knows where' Sparrow?
'The precipice neatly tempting us to fall and fall again instead of a steady progress', yes. . .
We're a 'second away from stepping off' and we're both afraid of the heights, oh yes very afraid of the normal deathwish. . .
'Encased together in air' we would be and 'awake from sleep for always' along the other tortuous path that meanders on currents in the air. . .
At last flying if only for a moment, your tiny wings unable to support me for longer than it takes to realise that I don't have a chance to stay alive for more than the time to realise that. . .
it's an infinite regress of disappointment. . .
In all the most powerful dreamtime, to think we must always stumble and be picked up by the loving hand hopefully, but here right now the plummet of an 'endless infatuation of shimmering ice, of darkness'. . .
a love affair with a big difference, it lasts 3.2 seconds per second per second before the ultimate consummation. . .
Leaning over, we catch a glimpse of each other in the vortex, your small hands waving mercifully but helplessly over my vision of the clouds. . .
Watching your decision to leave me behind, to find the Forkbeard, the petted friend of the last two years, the troll in these mountains that can really feed you the emotion which my own Peer Gynt impersonations cannot scrape, until the time comes when he can't feed any longer, no blame no blame. . .
And then the steep climb to the purgatorial tower, that binds to life an infinite mixture of pressure and release, of push and pull, of resignation and the little nudge forward along the wheel. . .
For me, it seems apparently a postscript. . .
'Frivolous convulsion, and an end, called vertigo'.

'But then I wouldn't have the distance measured in longing'. . .
Although what am I longing for?
The attraction there, no doubt. . .
your very photogenic spirit hovers just close enough so that I can fight out of the torpor and forward to a day that until then was unremarkable. . .

now dazzling. . .
'No, the danger lies in accepting the legacy of falling rapidly away, like some representative seen striding casually, gauntly indeed from the rockfall'. . .
He wanders elliptically away from stones, from the language of stones. . .
a very articulate soliloquy 'granted at the threshold of collapse' as in all the best middle arena plays. . .
A self-reflexive jibe to himself , when appearing. . .
'just visible at the end of a tunnel, his migration', from one doubt to another 'propped up by some smoke signal trailing'. . .
only it's an oblique warning to us all in our rickety, postmodern world view. . .
In his dream, a wandering away from the stability of the mountain, overhanging not abseiling. . .
and suddenly. . .
'the guns never knowing how to intrude into the frame'. . .
Suspend judgment on this poetry-prose, suspend judgment. . .
The phenomenon he experiences while tipping gradually over the only edge. . .
can be scored in this language, but it's far 'too neat', too conscious to express the vortex of elements, spun at velocity from the centre of the whirling crux of this vortex, black and white. . .
He's seen it before, in an everlasting acid melancholy 15 years ago. . .
would he doubt it now, if that other vision came whirling back, flashback?
For now. . .
'the chopping syntax' of your wide smile as the pavement, this time, whirls up of its own accord and our walking becomes climbing once more, intricate steps needed to avoid the always likely fall into, what?
Perhaps it's a fall upwards. . .
In our dream, yes that's how we ascend, together and even fly, hand in hand. . .
I'm trying to fly again but all is levitation, the control being in the power of some other force, though not the flier's volition. . .
the swimming out of dungeon windows mostly, out into the light from the darkness, no prison warder eye on me as I swirl triumphant, spirallic, gentle. . .
out of the window, through the black bars of confinement, to where?
At that moment I invariably wake up, am soused down with relief at having escaped again. . .
but Sparrow, you are always escaping until I believe it becomes a lifestyle and a settling routine of migration in your world of neat avoidance. . .
Not happy to laugh in a group situation you said. . .
well I'm maybe one up on you now, because I know that's fake, a phony reason for not sitting one-to-one, as we used to. . .

(Who am I kidding?). . .
The Rioja standing by, seeming to be drunk and emptied, without a second of time passing, so rapt the attention on both stillness and fluttering in the room. . .
At that point a real avalanche of the sensibilities occurring. . .
when will you be my sister once again?
When you are old enough, you can reply. . .
and I'm not yet born. . .
And you seven years old, playing with your two big sisters in the garden, your father benevolent over the window box. . .
You were a 1945 babby, the liberated continent's toast to peace. . .
you can't get over it, wasn't your choice and somehow to have choice is forever important to you, even though you are so accommodating, kind and so on. . .
Oh yes and photogenic. . .
those truly stunning snapshots of your own family I would kind myself staring at for long times. . .
the children with your smile, your maternal embrace knowing they are yours, the hereditary dazzling faces promoting the glad tidings of light against dark. . .
Now 20 years a mother, you are finally finding wings for yourself, along the way you are bound to bump into several kindred spirits, although you keep yourself huddled under the blanket of sidesteps, have you ever sidestepped on a mountain path?
We are not goats, mountain sheep. . .
who knows with metempsychosis?
But you are moving in and out of the bird kingdom all the time. . .
enough time spent in your close company, gazing at your dazzled face and the flicker of transcendence in the brow working its way down the cheek and the mouth, slightly tilting nose and the body alters shape subtly. . .
Sometimes when you were walking past my window, I can almost see the change happening as the shoulder blades extend themselves once more and the hands very slightly twitch and the ends of your arms/wings, wings now perhaps. . .
If you were a character in a Latin American magical realist text you would indeed fly, just take off, nobody would question or be amazed. . .
just like walking off to lectures in the morning, a normal everyday event in magical downtown Roehampton. . .
But back to the chopping syntax of your movement. . .
'Not too hurried' it says here, in my poem offering to your spirit, based on the above-mentioned dream, so. . .
plunging back into the subconscious. . .
'the poison/poisson coming later when the shot has rung out'. . .
The gamekeeper shouts his triumph over the hawk twitching in the framed

sunlight, you are safe Sparrow, low flying and humble, you hear the 'tiresome bell of stormed signal cracking'. . .
The idiocy pouring out to the pavement of unwonted hysteria, the shrieks, is it laughter or screaming you hear?
'The timed perfection' of death come, 'engaged not in the latest fashion' or style, just plain old death (Vonnegut again, 'Slaughterhouse 5'). . .
it is 'obscured, the racing metabolism' of ambition shielded from the actual pulse and pace of life. . .
'The tip of the arrowhead' has always struck momentarily, enough for the damage required. . .
'Only above the knotted eye of your thought' dear Sparrow, all will be healed before it's too late. . .
'Miraculous, she gave away to tasteful mimicry' didn't she?
'He wasn't dead, merely dying of age', like all of us yes?
The relief of successful compassion 'stretches ahead finitely, as it will for all of us'. . .
The mirror smashed will still reveal, in a fragment, her beady eye safe from all effort at earning a crust, your comment brushed aside at the breakfast table, the small mouth now pouting ashamedly. . .
although never admitted, the peal of ringing laughter, your signal from how far away?
I can hear it now, it has a haunting quality for sure. . .
this night I hear it from Gurnard. . .
tremendous pealing, insistent laughter and cheerfulness all the way from your domicile in Cambridge. . .
Sometimes also from Essex, a county figuring prominently in this account of dreams, mirrors and obsessions. . .
in Essex where the domestic life of Forkbeard dwells, although I'm hardly qualified etc etc, since he is high German romantic 19th century, whereas the classical music spirit in opposition for this pedant here chez moi lives, eats and sleeps in the Paris cafes of the early 20th. . .
complete antipathy musically I would imagine. . .
Meanwhile, beloved guest-deutscher Mozart trilling away at the string quintets again, this Mozart playing becoming an associated obsession. . .
Rather rashly we also have a couple of violin concertos, but they're destroyed into grease by the fatuous oinkings and squealings of some Jewish fiddlers, no names please. . .
all that schmaltz potato love emotion smothering the purity of the line.

'Just at this point, a diary', intruding. . .
'records of recording', a self-reflexive industry of confession, self-delusion, hunting for the unconscious truth in every situation. . .
'An enhanced dopey egghead scenario petering out in flattery', the

Forkbeard way to fantasy, how he charmed you out of your independent life, though that is another story (your own, who must needs find your own smashed mirror equivalent). . .
Your own ' exhumed poisons, obstinate moments of determination, and thought derailed'. . .
even train journeys can fall off a cliff into the speeding ditch of destruction. . .
'How soon the practice of this diary yields to poetry', even of the brain's cortex, the view of the journey under the sea, the migration to a sunnier clime, the extract from your life microfilmed in its sub-human glory, a model of detraction and sense. . .
'Not me, no no, the action falters, must falter for a second as we glance, collective, perplexed in our duty' as sentinels guarding the almost frenzied appearance of the duck and the drakes from their tippling at the bar. . .
Watching, Cavalier and I, as the ducks and drakes reel in, 1 am, we're lounging nonchalant in the hallway of the cell-block, Benson and Hedges, cup of old tea and new coffee, phasing remarks of personal pleasure beyond merit and demerit, the reeling fatuous hoorah of boredom trying to stroll through our path, jerking instead, the patched politeness of barlife without the life. . .
And you among them Sparrow, transformed into the cockney sparrer for a moment, the unflying grounded dodo-type, though not yet extinct, pecking among the ducks and drakes. . .
Your linguistic roots are showing through, we know what you're doing. . .
Underneath that crafted and carefully sublime Home Counties lilt, ten generations of Eastend guts and honesty, graft and shopgirl reduction. . .
Yes the duty of sentinels to watch over with compassion, to accept, to praise, encourage, even flatter, the Cavalier and I, not forgetting of course the Naughty Martin (house martin) smoking unserene in the armchair, third sentinel of the cell-block, your faltering flatterer, admirer and all-round good egg, mad as a proverbial hatter though. . .
Back to the poem ahem, it's a 'leaf upon leaf' falling slowly from the tree (really), this life for you 'enacted by the continuous state of autumn, of middle life, not stagnant though the whisper of our tree', the bird and the tree again (see also 'before our names' section herein) 'swaying as a hand caught in an unguarded series of moments, of movements'. . .
Of terrific space collapsed into a smile for the benefit of the boys, those army creeps (sorry, Sparrow) we remember with distaste amongst the drakes and the ducks, their hangers-on. . .
The industry of fun cranking up another turn as the outer Circle shifts a nudge. . .
no flying for you tonight, they'll all come down on you like a ton of bricks given half a chance, and they have got half a chance, they're paid well enough. . .

but it's all beer and stupid comments, sliding off the rank and greaseproof tongues, lardface smirks, jokes about the totally sanitised life of the sordidly average. . .
But you, you don't fit in, why don't you admit it for once in your life?
Just as Hawkeye didn't fit in with that crowd of creeps and mock-gangsters, types that are euphemistically called salesmen. . .
Why don't you stop pretending?
You too, but all my adored sisters, tell me about it at 3 am in the morning, how your life is collapsed. . .
In separate rooms at different times, split off from each others' reflections in the mirror you serially tell me, chatting on together though apart, the amiability of life's problem, so much talking in the ear at once. . .
Strange that we should never be all three in the same room together, the three siblings, united at least in their disparities. . .
Sparrow, Hawkeye and me, just like that other Circle, never meeting quite. . .
Your own dilemma Sparrow, shines in another splinter, refraction this one's energy, bending the prism of talk/talk backwards onto itself. . .
then I cannot describe it here without offsetting the balance of my concentration on your enigmatic enough spirit. . .
Yes I know what it is now, the poem says 'grace passed off as energy'. . .
The beautiful spirit derailed at the last minute before honesty. . .
Yes, 'yes the every now and again duty of manic disabled personality' let loose from the scrum of your worldly existence. . .
'Yes, the turning shoulder' of your transmutation into wings 'takes up 50 years of real time' in your own peculiar evolutionary ladder, climbing up to Sparrow personality from the dark depths of shaken-off sisterhood, your two real sisters in their fifties now, looking middle-aged in your noticeboard photos, where did you inherit that smile, dazzling?
The wing, yes it's obvious now that I will probably never sit with you in the same room alone again, during the 50 years of real time 'showing itself to be a masked shield over nothing'. . .
Pour on Mozart till the end of my song etc, and don't spare the horses. . .
because I need to reach my journey's conclusion in treble quick time. . .
I gaze at the mirror, I lie on top of the mirror, it winks and sparkles endlessly at me, the original enigma of creation, the double folding expression of infinite regress. . .
But don't think that I will ever forget you Sparrow. . .
The healing of mirror-imaged spirit continues.

Towards the blue-souled orchid
that hid from our sight.
The framework of boulders,
a shout away from avalanche,
growing ominous and ever
hopeful beyond our reach; never

to have known the rarity of
its motion-always-still.
The last point of reference arched
behind the trail, walking,
walking back to who knows
where, the precipice neatly tempting
us to fall, fall instead of
steady progress, yes. The second
away from stepping off, encased together
in air, awake from sleep for
always, the
endless infatuation of shimmering ice,
darkness. Also, the frivolous
convulsion: an end, called vertigo.

But then I wouldn't have
the distance measured in
longing. No, the danger lies
in accepting the legacy of
falling, rapidly away, like
a representative seen striding
casually, gauntly from the
rockfall, the ellipse taken
for granted at the threshold of
collapse, just visible at the
end of a tunnel, the migration
propped up by some smoke signal
trailing, only oblique, the guns
never knowing how to intrude
into the frame. Too neat, the
chopping syntax pictured elegant,
not too hurried, the poison coming
later when the shot has rung out,
tiresome bell of stormed spinal
cracking; the idiocy pouring out to
the pavement of unwonted hysteria,
the timed perfection engaged
not in the latest fashion,
but obscured, the racing metabolism
shielded from value, the tip of
the arrow stuck momentarily, only above
the knotted eye
of his thought.
Miraculous, she gave away to
tasteful mimicry: he wasn't dead,
merely dying. The relief stretches
ahead, finitely, as it will for all
of us.

Just at that point, a diary. Records
of recording, an enhanced dope
petering out in flattery, exhumed
poisons, obstinate moments of
thought derailed. How soon,
the practice yields to poetry.
Not me, no no, the action falters
for a second, as we glance,
perplexed in duty, to a leaf upon

leaf, acted by the fall of
autumn, not stagnant the
whisper of our tree, swaying as
a hand caught in an unguarded
series of moments/movements, grace
passed off as energy.
Yes, the every
now and again duty of manic disabled
personality: yes, the recording of
the turning shoulder takes up 50
years of real time in showing itself
to be a masked shield over nothing.

Hawkeye:
Poem for Jude, patron saint of waifs and strays, No 1

The first dream of the patron saint of waifs and strays. . .
In your supposed sublime state of compassion (or is it pity?
we had many arguments over that one. . .
what was the difference between the two?
Indeed myriad definitions, it could even mean to feel sorry for, could it not?)

Anyway your compassion, did you inherit it as a sort of psychic anima, transferred from your mother, after those three miscarriages of hers or was that simply a euphemistic dialogue on your part Hawkeye?
After three delays let's say, you arrived, well we've talked about that, at great length in life and probably will do in book, before the day is out. . . dear reader, your patience will probably not be rewarded. . .
these fireworks will continue to squib for as long as I have the time and energy to myself squib them out of the sardonic mouth. . .
But your compassion is a celebrated mistrust of the ease of conversation, the Refectory Mode and so on. . .
Known as Our Mutual Friend by the rest of the Circle, that is of Cavalier and myself, OMF for short, you have settled into a lifestyle of backpedalling and perversity, all to the ends of a mighty schism as they say. . .
or rather, you do not say. . .
What's the word Hawkeye, that I'm looking for?
Ah it'll come, eventually, the word that I'll find in your speech, hidden, concealed behind every different type of enigmatic smile and so forth. . .
Meanwhile Mozart whiles away another hour and a half with his Church Sonatas, they're beautiful and really sublime, but terribly unpopular and unplayed I'm told blah. . .
Just up your cleanest of clean Catholic alleys too, as I sit here frenzied in type, feeling your transmitted twinge, your tug at the cord of my desire for your sisterly friction. . .
Never the object of your compassion, but you always of mine. . .
that's because of the split, the schism, the last thing you can tell the priest in that little box, that big and almighty sincere confession is that you feel love for this wacky sibling- type, but you could never tell me except in fleeting instants and that was an illusion, wasn't it sister?
The dilemma of the fancifully ritualised, and it was definitely ritual. . .
Well, on to the dream, but this wasn't a dream ha, a sort of fantasy made insanely flesh, that is the true poem that we grappled with for sure, on the threshing floor of your mind's arena of pleasure. . .
Oh how we laughed our collective horsey laugh in the face of mortality's sting. . .
no doubt you'll find that a bit fancy, somewhat pretentious, a mite prattish even, but that's the way I see it darling bud.

'That no one else knows a confession makes a difference'. . .
That's a line from a poem I sent you, number one in fact, and as you pull out this unsavoury splinter from the eye of my smashed mirror, you might conceivably recognise it and spit out the unvarnished bile of the truly safe communicant, no use mixing it with that lovely blackcurrant wine or whatever it is that they pour down the throat at mass time. . .

Only the confessee knows it makes a difference. . .
When you are, for that moment, totally sincere, sins can be absolved (you said). . .
But will they catch your breath, these trinkets of verse, as you said in one of your supposed sincere moments with me. . .
alone God knows I'm no priest, although I'm presuming sincerity is something of itself in all the various guises, in all the situations in which it is squibbed to the surface of things from those collective depths, of heights from which it springs, bubbling and mostly spontaneous. . .
The difference involved in that confession is like 'inside the mind's labyrinth unwound, a vast building'. . .
Cripes that's only the second line. . .
it'll take weeks to sort this one out, and I'm no Theseus that's for sure, and I know you won't even know who Ariadne is, apart from some totally tangential retort about black widows. . .
Anyway inside this bloody building, and I do mean bloody since it's stiffed with the suffering menopausal discharge of all them saints portrayed in your wandering vocabulary of essential stigmata association. . .
it echoes a previous absolution, do you remember?
That was the one then, that was sincere. . .
which five minutes after leaving the box you smashed in your own mirror of desire. . .
Oh what the fuck, you said, as the rivets hammered home past two cups of black coffee and a few fried breakfasts served with panache (while you were ill with two separate bouts of 'flu) by the other, by the brother and so on and so forth. . .
'This absolution masking the precious myth of its own illusion' baby, oh yeah, indeed it does. . .
No myth, therefore no illusion, as they say down at Carter Street, near St Paul's, your old stomping ground as a child in the City environs, the City, ah that's a whole another story, lunches at the AA cafe, so figuratively apt, the Art Nouveau windows, the only time I ever saw your face at rest, gazing around inside this splendid restaurant, your glinting eye quieted for a little while, not swooping. . .
Yes that's another novella in that one moment. . .
Back to the plot. . .
'insensitive passage of time can rob our seasons in laughter', the horse stands to attention and neighs her unfiery guffaw over the whole of Roehampton. . .
they used to lay bets outside your window, the Puck-on-a-leash, Welshgirls (Mandy etc) and Froebel college bimbettes who lived a few yards across the way in their own cell-block, if you were faking it. . .
that strangulated horse you carried in your throat. . .
Like a warning to any young folks walking innocently by, muttering sweet

nothings to themselves, to each other. . .
they heard it no worries, loud and clear. . .
So that's what illusion is, the awful impalation of the horse on barbed wire, popping blood like a gush, and horsey guffaws rending the air like nitrates scarring the water of our streams at night. . .
Yeah yeah laughing, we get it Hawkeye, the laugh's always on us, how could it be otherwise, to protect our fragile leaking ego?
The laugh's only on me actually, at this point hoho, maybe. . .
'All over you hurt, really, without the power to exorcise the thrill of beauty'. . .
you were over the top, and I held you down until we were sane again, though I guess you don't like to agree with that one. . .
It is a bit of a wild statement, not one that would endear me, although was I ever endeared, or was it rather endured?
Sorry about that Cavalier out there in Chigwell, just a little pun, a bad one admittedly, just to see if you were still awake and kicking. . .
I've just sent you about twelve thousand of these little words and you're feeling sleepy over them, can't say I blame you. . .
it's all too much to take in, this postmodernist claptrap, literary indigestion for the incautious, the saintly who have taken on this burden of actually ploughing through the stuff. . .
Literary indigestion blah, and you the dearest of dear readers, that's my final pathetic attempt at allaying your collective fear, albeit a very mean and futile one. . .
it's all unremitting slog from now on, or rather I should mean remitting. . .
I mean that you can remit, go home, give up, I'm almost pleading with you, leave it off, go home to Mummy, say nice things to Daddy, just leave me alone with my obsession, for Chrissake. . .
It's all these fancy arsy-versy poems for the next twenty thousand words or so, with little heart-stopping breaks for some actual sense in between (not too much though). . .
Ah now there's only 17 of you left (who am I kidding?)
Let's get on now with the really juicy stuff, no sex though. . .
this is a clean, moral and completely unblue work of art, know what I mean?
'Watch out he comes swinging with that orb of smoke and light', the priest that is, this is the second verse, I hope you're sorting out which are the lines of verse (in between the speech marks '. . .') and which are insidious little comments around them reader, a small quiz for you all to unravel. . .
but what does it all mean?
In the awful post-postmodern world of chaos in about 2005, when they resuscitate the worst type of game shows, as those portrayed for instance by the excellent (and I mean it) Robert Coover in his raunchy satire on contemporary and slightly future American social mores blah. . .
(And I saw him read some of that good stuff, at his feet literally, in a

crowded room in Universityville, yes I was there, hushed tomes, tones even). . .
They, the 2005 persons, will be asking the very obscure questions that I'm posing right here and now, wow avant-garde by such a long way old chap. . .
how do you sort the poetry from the prose in such an awkward work like this?
Best just ignore it and do something much more useful instead. . .
Cavalier I know you're still with me in my lamentations, my listener, my benefactor, smoking buddy, eternal pessimist of the clouded, smoky psyche. . .
'To raise out the spirit', that's the priest again, you've got to hang on to every word you know, if this is ever to make any sense. . .
I don't compromise, not when it's such a diamond sparkling little fragment of mirror such as this one. . .
The priest, he's raising the spirit level haha. . .
it's sardonic yeah, 'weaving a picture to make us stand up and take notice'. . .
it's all ego, this priestly racket, cordon bleu/blue ribbon at the source. . .
what bloody posers, and again I mean bloody, remember what I said about the menopause, wake up at the back there!
Now I'm turning to Hawkeye. . .
it's that you again that we've hearing so much of, the obsession. . .
harping on the same old nerve, piloting back to the same old core of pain, rather like your own catholic creed, the central core of pain and essential suffering you called it, in a few of your more lucid (according to you that is) moments. . .
'In you the pain of longing easily dispelled', so they say those slimy smoothtalkers, filthy backstabbers, the fathers of all Ireland and their damned hierarchies of saved and
sinners. . .
the free market economy of absolution they might as well call it. . .
I know you're enjoying this Mr Cavalier, a jolly decent downer on popery going right down the right side of the gullet. . .
'The tragedy that is the past moment linked so soon with our future still unplanned in the final comfort', yeah this torture place which is 'an antechamber, called the essential', the actually oblique stamping ground of quitted souls, which we must not become at any costs and so on blah. . .
The final comfort of having to splurt out some kind of repentance whatever the former life, the old sins, unabsolved, unsincere in all their details, unrecognised. . .
My mental image of it is still that silly scene in 'Brideshead' (telly version) with grandpa Larry doing his best to make the sign, the idiot priest

reeling with anguish at how he was going to get this very rich, very influential and moreover very decadent old codger to budge the few inches into grace that he needed for his cosmic scorechart, oh ho. . .
It's a 'closet with a skeleton' Hawkeye, that never was and never will be, and certainly ain't now, a single thing in that coffin except for your future shimmering acceptance of mortality as it really is. . .
it's a 'passion for sweet existence praising the sky without number'. . .
And everybody says that you love life and live it for enjoyment and pleasure and so on, how little they really know you. . .
yes miss Hawkeye on the wing forever, when are you going to have the time to feed on what it is, this life?
'The only scene in heaven shows a lot of empty chairs that once had collected cobwebs', but now are devoid of even that tenuous sign of death after life. . .
Only here, in that mental picture I have just conjured but which you will not accept in a million years, 'only here will there be our instant of not belonging'. . .
it's all over in a trice of wickedness, we've made it through to the other side of eternal nothing. . .
we wait there on our stallion and mare, waiting to ride off into the blazing sunset, but we forgot something, didn't we?
The bloody sunset, that's what we forgot. . .
And what is that instant, it's 'the line of life', that's what. . .
can't imagine why I wrote that as the last line, the poem, remember?
Ah yes the last line, a bit coy, somewhat bravado, teeny touch poseur yes, though the narrative continues. . .
and Hawkeye, if you only knew how many more twists there are to this tail (or tale) as you were fond of assuring me there would be no more twists, you'd rush down from darkest metropolis and even you would beg to be released. . .
But Cavalier the puppeteer and amateur clairvoyant knows otherwise. . .
Read on, in mirror splinter number blah, and as uncle Herman (Melville again) said, there's probably more to this masquerade than I've yet confessed, chums.

> That no one else knows a confession makes a difference.
> Inside the mind's labyrinth unwound, a vast building,
> echoes a previous absolution, masking a precious myth of its own illusion.
> Insensitive passage of time can rob our seasons in laughter.
> All over you hurt without the power to exorcise the thrill of beauty.
> Watch out he comes swinging that orb of smoke and light
> to raise out the spirit,
> weaving a picture to make us stand up and take notice.
> In you the pain of longing easily dispelled; the tragedy that is the past moment
> linked so soon with our future still unplanned in the final comfort,
> an antechamber called essential,
> a closet without a skeleton,

the passion for sweet existence praising the sky without number.
The only scene in heaven shows a lot of empty chairs that once collected cobwebs.
Only here, on earth, will there be our instant of not belonging: the line of life.

Hawkeye:
poem for St Jude No 2

Ah the second very dream of Hawkeye, the St Jude of the parish, typed to the strains of Wolfgang the precious 'Vesperae solennes de confessore'. . .
offertories and so on and so forth, supreme church sacred in the sky music. . .
Hendrix called his own compositions 'church sky music', but then your brother would know that. . .
you're of a differing and different half-generation. . .
it's your musical food, hoping to generate a little more Catholic angst to carry on with the mission of dethroning the centrality of suffering, pain and guilt as the holy trinity. . .
there, I've said it at last. . .
Anyway I once said to you, before the swinging punch landed on my upturned lips. . .
there must be a grain of truth to this religion if it can inspire that sort of music. . .
his Credo Mass I believe was sparkling and booming on the little cassette in the foyer of your own cell-block entry, on a lazy afternoon, trailing round to see you on the off- chance, two blocks up from mine in the lunar Roehampton home for frenzied interloping manic depressives (trainee teachers that is). . .
the sun-filled afternoons of that long, long summer term.

'Absolve my sin with the touch of your hand', before the moon strikes too hard with the quality of sin I have adored from my misspent youth, although I cover up with the sheen of respectability called being a crumb at your table etc. . .
'So say the theory, so walk the lion Christ, so bend the evercurving labyrinth, so chase the dragon, so spring the awful truth', so melded the smile in that face, reminding of a cockney Meryl Streep, that had seen the sights of agrophobic mania lurch on regardless. . .
So many songs I could sing of. . .
Imaginings at best, you weren't so forthcoming Hawkeye, with the soft centre I knew was unfolding in the fading of the sun, at twilight. . .
'Of lonely booth in darkness' that squashed sphere or circle, the flat earth of

absolution. . .
Michael Foucault said openly. . .
the only reason confession survived through the centuries was the church's vested interest in the continual re-appraisal and renewal of sexuality and language entwined, embracing. . .
'Of (dis)solving all in the suspension of belief'. . .
Yes yes, like STC(oleridge) in the old mariner's tale, the rolling waves of slimy danger beyond the hermit's little seat of intimate suffering and silence, the language bitten, coursing over the sickly waves like the golden mildewed thread drawing on the destiny of pain, suffered in the ectoplasm of silent suffering by the uncomprehending passengers and crew both. . .
why does STC crop up so often in my thoughts of you?
'Just for one instant it attacks the solidified heart', the petrified bone. . .
'Announced the pagan adrift in the winedark sea', right back to the Homeric one it stretches, STC a mere whippersnapper in this context of traditional whingeing in the dark, whistling even, keeping up the spirits in the tacky obsolescence of this craving, craving. . .
Why am I thinking of him so much just now, that old paranoid, in connection with your own psychic baulking?
Am I the pagan in your connection perhaps. . .
or what I stand for haha (the awkward customer) in your supposed lovelorn existence?
We pursued, ah yes I use the dreaded and collective pronoun even though only I acknowledge the clemency of this partnership. . .
we 'pursued the element called faith never dancing', in my dream not a single appearance of companionship nor joy, just an unattainable joylessness inscribed with the certain end in tears, is this compensation?
Your face shifting out of the shadows, in order to become an even darker mass of horsey, indigestible desire. . .
'Never dancing , but always out of reach', your happiness too, this is the cutting off point between love and destiny, it should be called. . .
'You had forgotten the effect of time's loneliness but now you remember', my dream said. . .
'the moment of recognition' (you did remember that, in a big way) the steely glint of your losing of yourself for an unexpected instant in my eye, perfectly calm beyond you, two inches away. . .
Accepting, challenging, but you turned away to clamour for more, the moment of. . .
'Recognition, face to. . .
the actual pressure of your palm on my brow'. . .
Whose brow? Yours? Mine? Not the priest's surely?
We are an unholy menage a trois that's for sure, okay perhaps the real

Roehampton Circle, so powerful the three of us need never to meet in any room together. . .
the only time a Cavalier photo session, snap/snap/snap outside in the pastureland, squirrels running around delightedly. . .
still life with ghost of badger and an awkward fireman's lift of mock rescue. . .
No, this alliance a distinctly murky and dreamy affair full of bristling and contradictions. . .
I reach out for your hand, I touch instead the hairy back of hand of father O'Reilly whoever, blah blah, repulsion. . .
No no, not the hairy hand!
Collapsing with laughter, but you don't see the joke, perhaps there isn't one. . .
I wake up, the usual sweating, I've written another poem which denigrates your sublime soul. . .
cut, cut down in heaven for the papyrus to write this lament of mismatch. . .
Dear sister, I miss you, when the vines crackle in the searing wind, when the fires are burning particularly acridly tonight, at bedrock I miss you. . .
Not again the flimsy pretext, the welcoming hawk-glint, the upset plan.

Absolve my sin with the touch of your hand
so say the theory
so say the lion Christ
so bend the evercurving labyrinth
so chase the dragon
so spring the awful truth
of lonely booth in darkness
of (dis)solving all in the suspension of belief
just for one instant
attacking the acidified heart
announced the pagan adrift in the winedark sea
pursued the element called faith never dancing
but always out of reach
You had forgotten the effect of time's
loneliness but now you remember
The moment of recognition, face to
The actual pressure of your palm on my brow

Cavalier:
poem of birth trauma

My dear Cavalier. . .
once again I hit the Imperial 66 to bring you messages from the cellar of involvements in image perception that have become my thoughts these last two weeks. . .
As the text expands, as it takes on a form from chaos. . .
as the classification grows, enumerates, complicates itself into more and more complex and outrageous structures, I remain attached to your service as sole reader, only sharer of this galloping search into the netherworld of the psyche's mansion. . .
Just today I sent off the first batch of my crumbs to Chigwell and it prompted me to think of how my characters are emerging, how the information has been precipitated into form, how the form itself both solves and dissolves the idea at the heart of this book. . .
How can a smashed mirror be observed?
Can it be put back together without harm to the setter or the observer?
Can these repressions so deeply ingrained in dreamlife be set free as the maimed bird renews impeccable flight and rejoins the world it has been driven into rejecting by its comfort of synchronicity?
This evening the writers' own enemy and secret pal, the block. . .
Words frozen in their juice, gnarled up in cliché, misbegotten and unmoved. . .
But should it be included (this tension), should it be embraced?
Accepted, not curbed or ignored?
Cursed at or baited?
Has it a place, especially in the incestuous text, where every shard of glass nestles uneasily with its immediate neighbour, grinds unceasingly its

sharp axis?
Each of you jostling for place in my scheme of things. . .
Until I could realise that I am grovelling to you all, a continuous stream of expectation turning to disappointment, as I parade my fears. . .
projecting the anima, hum. . .
Never having really forgiven the original trauma. . .
Perhaps I should tell you of that. . .
vital perhaps, I cannot contain it for ever, one of those potentially definable excesses which must at last take form, because without it, the brain is compelled to produce anti-matter that corresponds, as a simulacrum, as a pastiche of the original sublime network of possibilities. . .
colour beyond the grey dissolving of the garden.

I was four weeks overdue, everything had been done, that in 195- could be expected to have been done. . .
the tests, the injections, the inducements, the pacing around the floor. . .
A lot of pacing in this book you'll note Cavalier. . .
it's an obsessional text after your own dear 'Letters to Sylvie'. . .
Dad not one for pacing, only in the privacy of his own imagination. . .
just got on with things, the practical man, Mum all bloated and fed up, yet serene, she had been told a little. . .
It was hypertension. . .
would have had high blood pressure, wasn't told too much about the real illness (toxaemia) not a lot known about it then, although nowadays easily combated by the right drugs, then was largely a chemical mystery. . .
and if very lucky, both of the protagonists of the birth scene survived, but it wasn't certain, by a long chalk my dear. . .
Four weeks overdue, another damned injection, she was full of it, overripe, beginning to turn a bit mouldy inside here, wanting to burst, but cannot. . .
the mechanics of self-destruction and its opposite, patience, already in contradiction and conflict, before day one. . .
how else could it be, inside here?
As you've seen, that counter-role still operates today, a mixture of people that must eventually say. . .
I can't place him, can't sort out in my mind what he's doing, what he's up to. . .
and those who say, he's just a prat, don't take any notice. . .
And then those who unconsciously see the contradiction in terms merely of my opportunism, manipulation of others, a chancer, through words mostly, spinning a web of them, just as I'm doing now in fact, in order to evade responsibilities, to exorcise repressions, an endless string of commas to justify more and more the illusion and evasion. . .

persuading the sisters to be with him, to be companions, to intrude into his dreams, celebrate the rites (and passages) of self-admiration and quasi-incest. . .
stop and go!

Already in contradiction, the modes and obsessions of time, a mix-up over the delivery dates, could have been. . .
The world seemed a burst bud from the inside, the whirl of unconscious psyche breaking up into probabilities, factions, material to be harnessed. . .
'Enveloped prospect, space'. . .
I'm still in here, there, an all-knowing, yet to be separated being. . .
broken open in two, in three, in four, in increasing numbers of airsucked nobility arising from the swamp of seeds. . .
It's 'distilled an accurate longing for this beautiful day', the day of my birth. . .
At the exact moment of entry, three thousand miles away, the curtain rose on the first ever stage performance of 'Under Milk Wood', uncle Dylan stumbling there in the wings of a crummy theatre in New York, he was still writing the stuff for the last part of the text while the first half was being performed, a metaphor for the life we all live perhaps. . .
A little bit last minute there Thomas, but we'll let you off, because it's a jewel of meaning cast into a sea of chaos. . .
all down there in his personal unconscious, a slim filter letting most of that stuff through, rosy and blown-out in extravagance. . .
one of those bridges between the unformed and the formed as all great works are. . .
It speaks in both directions at once, without weariness, without scorn, breathing forgiveness and understanding to both sides, it does not neglect each obsession directed against it. . .
The words live and sing and this being at last formulated into those of words of transcendent value and earthy comedy on a rainy night in downtown New York, while 8 am in Portsmouth England my existence was being sealed up hermetically as the via negativa, a brand on the forehead stamped with this device. . .
'Approached and wrapped in silent music as something holds together, miraculous almost decisive', the first inklings of a response inherent in the blood bag surrounding my only chance at life, 'the inward completion', the exceptional concentration of the one-off. . .
'Joy passes over into serenity', which returns from time to time in the University library, October 1985 to be precise old chap, when as in a trance I warbled the poetic thread you see running through this splinter Cavalier, it came to me, waiting to be expressed in unknown, perhaps dangerous pleasures. . .

Now four years later it stretches into a kind of prose, for your eyes only currently, and as I continue on and on, wandering happy in the labyrinth, I'm convinced no other is going to want to read it. . .
and I haven't even the courage to read the stuff out loud to myself in this domestic room at Gurnard, family and Friend next door sleeping yet watchful of any footfall of heretic nighthawks. . .
Not as in the all-night sessions of reading, notes, discussion and waffling in the B6 room Benson and hedges vapour. . .
the squalor you called your cell-block from home. . .
then I could read aloud without fear, mostly fear of myself I admit. . .
with eagerness almost, since the ear of your psyche was reverberating with the same wave, the same thought crescendo of understanding and perhaps even happiness, yes yes, don't change a word, you'd say, except. . .
All the time the tea, strong with two bags a cup, ruining your stomach lining, though somehow a magic and key ingredient to the creative strategy, hate the stuff myself (but you know this). . .
These moments linked to that transcendent library half-hour of composition, posed at the end of this shard. . .
usually so arse-tight about time and the need to work at the reading for classes, at the essays, but for this little time gave up the barriers, intimidations, boundaries to look at the satisfaction of gathering in the need to find the only possible golden thread of words to describe the comfort of fore-birth. . .
More fortunate than the thread-hunting misanthrope Steppenwolf in some respects, although he did find (the actual, hallucinogenic) Mozart at the end come to think of it. . .
This is digression, please forgive me Cavalier. . .
so I'm back in the womb, all present and correct, the quietness ready to disintegrate. . .
Ah yes yes 'joy passes over into serenity'. . .
'The bathing of wounds by quietude', no mirrors in here old chap, the walls are no-colour, the ant(i)-matter left over from blood-red. . .
'A lesson from memory has disguised, soaking through awareness', a real need of oxygen through that veiny pipe, thanks Bill Blake again, but he's right. . .
'Positions of foetus body confided with no one in mind' as the confessee. . .
And now the event, incident, the point at which this splinter of fiction and good works has been sliding in a slippery way towards, 'the delineation of abstract coherence softened by the actual hands of birth, warm from a new reckoning'. . .
The muffled screams begin to roar louder in my one sacred ear, the connection of cry from that source of myself splits latently and horrible into light and darkness. . .

the darkness, the journey under the sea having been shelter, all embracing safety. . .
The reality, searing, of muffled hormonal synchronicity. . .
these eternities since the first and only spark of conception, the big bang theory in microcosm. . .
this is the only life of mine I'm talking about here, I won't get another. . .
I won't even get another chance to write it all down, it's all up, the game's up and it has to be noted down, inscribed, I cannot rest until it has. . .
you can rest, you've got years left Cavalier, moments big with searching for meaning out the window. . .
and you also dear readers, whether the stroke of life has hit or not. . .
How can I control this stroke of life for you, for me?
How about if you collapsed during the middle of reading this text?
The last thing your mortal eyes concentrated on as the cosmic dust hit the fan and you had to wind up that confrontation with the main face, to look back with contentment of endless programmed horror, or perhaps peace. . .
But now in 195- the darkness, cosy world of slippery comfort was torn down the migrant middle as the end of the tunnel slid into view, yet unfocused. . .
At that moment, stuckness. . .
no go, say no go. . .
though I must come through, I can come through, it's the one first minute of the dilemma of existence, but we've all come through that sparky squashed part of the tunnel and will return to it. . .
this is certain if only one thing is certain, soaking through awareness yes. . .
The hands, reaching, he's coming, the tufts of hair, he's not coming. . .
the trauma the trauma, potholing in the mountains of the moon. . .
he's stuck, gyrating, pausing. . .
pushing pushing. . .
pausing, screams, cries, moans, surrounded, the light breaking up the darkness and shattering it. . .
it's cracking the spine of my/our hypertension, the bulb snapping the neck, or nearly so. . .
The huge metal forceps arriving, groping, hitting lunging, stretching, sticking, attracting, forcing/forcing, over-ripe over-ripe, not yet not yet, can't wait can't wait, trauma, no go must go, push pull break apart, break apart break apart, break apart break apart. . .
Hauled into light, slid the rest, frantic intake of solid air, air gasping all the time, gasping suck, release in one long long strangled and first cry against air, the first the only, the only cry cracking, the rest of life spilling out in a continuous primal roller-coaster, sucking in debris/air/debris. . .
the total strangeness of breathing against air, air in, in suck, out suck blow,

in blow suck, without blow suck, get used to it, slamming against air, against air suck, get used to it, again get used to it, trauma trauma, over-reaching, incoherent, the wind, against the wind the gasp of air. . .
Light, noise, aggression of all known life against the air, life crowding in, more noise, light searing, swish of cold/coldest wind, blow suck, it must, it can't it can't, crying crying crying, suck, the pattern for all life set out here on the threshing floor of absolute newness, of pain/noise/light. . .
Trying to crawl back into subconscious comfort, already, there is no known room, the shutters are up. . .
no entry through that crack in time, the door in the wall heals up to ragged smoothness as my last leg flaps through the gap. . .
My head one-sided, malformed, still is, stretched the pliable skin and bone, flesh emptied of its direction, monstrous, birth trauma ha, weak eye from forceps on the left forever weak, certain parts of the brain/cortex and stem damaged for all existence, some recognition impaired by the bright metallic death hug of the forceps, the cold searing sterility, shiny, of dehumanisation bending the innate lamppost of song to my damaged inner ear, sense of balance cascading loose. . .
inert things talk in my dream, I'm lost in that dream forever now, home gone away, all gone, the lack of air, against air gone, must suck and blow this new life, an alien. . .
'Untimely habits crumble into absence', intrusion of poem sub-text. . .
the solid presence of total frightening fear, as ego enters knocking on the eager head of desire, Jakob (Bohme)'s fiery ungrund, again and again. . .
the insistent crush of sterile pain on the tender fontanelles, destroyed vision of sublime eternity, floating, one-celled in the darkness. . .
The eager head of desire. . .
to find, to want, the curiosity of the coffin looms already. . .
“Remember Kiev and Stettin” you said Cavalier, the bloody remnants of the fear of expectation in the Russian soul, a collective unconscious bending the air against itself, the nation's soul tearing into the light, broken up against darkness, as its death trauma erupts across the continent in hunger, snow, the gnawing pain of oppressed winter eating at the cortex of comfort. . .
In the Polish soul, remembering Kiev and Stettin, this is when I re-lived your prophecy in the past, mon Chevalier. . .
and I had been there, seen the shreds of flesh and metal dangling from the panzer tanks, the melodic groan and zip of the planes across the river Oder to mortal remains and wailing widows and girlfriends, mothers and orphans, the companionship of sisters gnashing their eyes against the air, wives and comrades shattered into the turbulent, thrashing noise of embittered silence forever. . .
'While my spirit that has turned, flipping in its aquatic turmoil', still flips, is hanging by its pearled feet in mid-air, unable to suck the breast, I'm all-

alone in this world, I'm a motherless child still here pretending to make sense of everything ho. . .
it all starts here in trauma, will set the scene for everything to follow. . .
'The womb that has lit the world's immanence' now sealed up, hermetic in its pain and suffering. . .
it 'leans into itself', folding up, unfolding again, creasing in folds, the blood wet inner skin, 'folds the safety of contemplation'. . .
None of that now though as everything hits the outer skin, the slimy mariner's vision of his own skin's landscape as the serpents writhe through its holes and arteries, so cold and frozen and green, peaked in time by the monster of aggressive air. . .
This truly the minotaur who waits patiently nine months at the centre of the labyrinth, waiting for the wary traveller to stray across his golden path. . .
and they all do, all the grasping souls hungry for mortality and a let out, an escape route from the tunnel of blood-red eternity. . .
Look my soul, 'look and listen, every form shall be exemplified in this moment among a continuous other'. . .
Wait and wait patiently still while the scheme of schemes unravels itself, unfolds the delirious twistings of the shreds and splinters of a crushed mirror, and I may see the pattern and paradigm both, of all hope and joy signal its beacon across the years today. . .
What now, Cavalier?
Well I survived ha ha, even though I didn't feed on the mother's milk. . .
But enough for tonight, the next coffee yum yum, energy still!
No fags for me, though I have the dubious pleasure of putting away the typewriter, delirious myself too with the sweat and tears of living the page (no blood except the memory of it). . .
a ritual to observe longingly and be performed lovingly. . .
Until tomorrow, I now slumber, one more splinter, my dedicatee.

> Enveloped prospect, space, has distilled
> an accurate longing from this beautiful
> day, approached and wrapped in silent
> music as something holds together: miraculous,
> almost decisive, the inward completion. Joy
> passes over into serenity, the bathing of
> wounds by quietude. A lesson from memory has
> disguised, soaking through awareness; positions
> confided with no one in mind. The delineation
> of abstract coherence softened by the actual
> hands of birth, warm from a new reckoning.
> Untimely habits crumble into absence,
> while spirit that has turned, flipping in its
> aquatic turmoil, the womb that lights the
> world's immanence, leans into itself,
> folding the safety of contemplation. Look
> and listen, every form shall be exemplified
> in this moment among a continuous other.

Someone's only sister:
the drowning

Synchronicity. . .
Dr Carl confirms the spontaneous gesture of the unconscious to create in its midst and spilling over to our conscious minds and lives. . .
two or more psychic events which migrate in attraction to each other, having compromised the uniqueness of each wonderful happenstance in its own glory, to confute the other and ourselves. . .
So begins the new section of my narrative of ellipse and obliqueness. . .
The reader, so hot under the collar, here's another 'you' for your edification and bemusement. . .
Synchronicity, a little more than the dimension of coincidence, to be sure. . .
I've experienced this complex phenomenon more and more. . .

but this past year. . .
All these people, the place Roehampton, the criss-crossings of telepathy almost. . .
knowing what the world will say at your doorstep every morning, the first step out, no faltering, but the sure tonic of mobility. . .
Maybe the centerings of this text will illuminate just some of the harmonic possibilities (so many happen every minute in the annus mirabilis). . .
I'd already begun to dream about this year a long while back. . .
so far back I can't, in all honesty remember the beginning, if there was one though it was the architecture of the place. . .
the little cell-blocks of twelve rooms, six up/six down in a larger complex of thirty-six, the block syndrome. . .
The honeycomb of industry but also desire, the adventure bending in on itself, walls leaning in comfort towards each other, the hapless participants obliged to lean
too. . .
adventure paid and played out in full within that compensation of dream time. . .
You were always there in different forms. . .
as companion, sometimes loving, the abject sister in that wandering walk amongst the dream doors trailing off from the golden thread of thinking in that recurring
dream. . .
Well anyway, back to that a little later. . .
what I really wanted to confide here, was the nature of your personality these last few weeks, the collective you, when the leaving of that place was becoming a reality in thought, the sad or glad goodbyes, the archetype people of sleep fading into the distance as objects melting, some sinking into the walls or earth quietly, some doing a runner shyly at the end, some waving the address book around. . .
But the last week, when I thought everything of import had already happened, that nothing could disturb the agitated phrasing of my heartstrings further, I received a piece of information that was so synchronistic it was perfectly floating in the border of consciousness, yet true in that absolute way which degrades the shiftiness of the usual hashed chanciness of human contact. . .
The awful and formal dinner, in which ceremony merged with embarrassment, the farewell do (leave it out) a forlorn myself sitting in my room afterwards, feeling. . .
is it worth the breath to return to the dance, the shuffle of present eyes shining with desire to cast away the glance?
I returned, out of loneliness probably. . .
to bump into yes, a chap who had left our cell-block earlier in the year, he had gone to live with a woman friend somewhere else in London, now

returned to say a cheery
hello. . .
But his friend, as soon as we met I knew. . .
Not a sister, but messenger with the most fantastic message and. . .
These synchronicities build up when a project is underway. . .
A text, a promise to the unconscious that one is open to influence and they start flooding in, helter-skelter and twice as bemused/serious to be a part of the set-up. . .
We immediately locked in to deep conundrums of meaning, spread out wide across the horizon. . .
Why wasn't I taking the summer job and so on and so forth?
Yeah well I had resigned, phoney communication down the line blah. . .
though what I really wanted to say (and said) was. . .
that I'm writing this novel, the bigmouth retort when obsessed by some venture twice as real as anything else happening. . .
Yet instead of the polite, eyes-to-the-side reply I'm used to, a chorus of psychic interest welling up and obliterating the total sound of danceroom chaos and drunkenness, jockeying for partnertime and neurotic disability, confusion that these occasions bring in their wake. . .
So what's it about then, this novel etc?
I glanced across her face, I knew the score I suppose. . .
and I let her have it there and then, on the line, the grasping for true identity that lay beyond the desire and recognition of you my sister. . .
sisters united in their distorted shards reflecting back my life in one smashed metaphor of sense and nonsense gilded with pride and blame, lustrous with organised shamefulness. . .
Sisters sisters, are you an only child?
Yes I'm writing this probably because I'm an only child, caught in the paradox of writing to an unknown and probably non-existent being centred in all these women and women I have tried to know deeply and honestly, but elusively it seems. . .
her gaze insistent, then the story, her story, spilling out in fantastic shape of dream. . .
Ten years ago, her only sister, some years younger than she. . .
intelligent, attractive, apple of the eye and so on and so forth, drowned off the coast of the Caymans, the only sister or sibling, lost forever in the foam of the Caribbean's monster gap of the ocean. . .
The uncontrolled agony of distance, years getting over it. . .
And then the sensational revelation, from the husband of that sister, years later. . .
she had been secretly murdered by drug squad officers. . .
sister had been too friendly with the black community, it's the 'natives' syndrome once more. . .
A planted stash of dope, hoping to quieten activities with a little

humiliation. . .
Then the turn-up, refusing to toe the line, something must be done, she's supposedly gone sailing with the chief of police, she didn't even know him. . .
and it all hushed up, my interlocutor so dumbfounded after all these years, no energy to go chasing half way around the world to challenge, dig up, prosecute, unmask and so on, it wouldn't bring her back etc. . .
And my new friend, stopping talking at last after half an hour of enormous emotional complexities, far more than I could ever write in a full novel. . .
and just stared at me. . .
the look said, you are looking for the sister you never knew in your dream-text. . .
And I am looking for that sister I did have, now cannot ever have, except in nostalgia that burns the deep core. . .
And I knew then my project was somehow crummy, but that at the same time it had been literally enlightened by this woman's story, her testimony that blew apart certain key concepts I needed to write one single word. . .
its arrival as revelation was timed perfectly, there could not have been another time, another hour even when this treasure would have been a tenth as revealing, as essential, as a catalyst could be. . .
in this hour, at this second, when I knew all I had to do was tell a story about you so clear, so straightforward that the splinters of distortion would merge together and a narrative would climb out of my vision and be coherent to me, if not to anybody else. . .
I was given that promise by the look in her eyes. . .
Several hours of relieved incoherencies followed, amongst which was a two-hour session with Cavalier, trying to persuade, against all the odds, and against his testimony of the Sylvie narration, that he could be happy again with another wife. . .
Is this fair, dear Chigwell, do you accept or except the formulation of this night's events?
And that was also the night before the Imogen proposal (see above), quite a week. . .
Oh my friend with the story, I may write to you more about this. . .
The synchronistic instance of your outpouring will not go to waste, the boat will rise with your sister intact in some previously forgotten astral or dream land, where you will meet again, with sorrow banished. . .
we will walk there together perhaps, with sisters both, reconstructed from the smashed glass without a blemish, resurrected from the unconscious longing. . .
intact, serene, inviolate.

Mum:
in the doctor's office

In the previous two shards. . .
the beginning of a life and the memory of a death. . .
and now the murky negotiations for a future life, one that is destined never to arrive, or to form a body, to gell into a crystallized set of possibilities called life-force or breath. . .
The sister lost out there in the limbo land, not quite having made the permitted stakes of breath. . .
The real sibling set against the grip of the tightrope. . .
the balance of oblivion strung forward an inch at a time. . .
My mother with toxaemia, exhausted, post-natal. . .
is told by the family doctor. . .
you were very lucky, don't take any more chances, you've got the one beautiful baby, you must hold back now from a possible repeat and so on and so forth. . .
Saying, yes doctor. . .
thinking, one more one more, for my perfect scheme of things, the inner and outer torn away indissolubly. . .
Just as that baby's trauma torn in two in the supposed tunnel. . .
the scene, usual, in the doctor's chair. . .
I rediscovered it recently in a poem by pediatric Doc WC Williams in a short story, his version a 'Cold woman' who had six or seven already though. . .
My Mum was even before that moment regretting the passing of a life that didn't exist, her thoughts turning on companionship for her little one. . .
the matching blue and pink. . .
Her own name had been changed, from infancy, in nickname to a male equivalent (the only way she could initially pronounce her own name). . .
did the mother want a boy so much in that generation?
Wanted a boy so much. . .
I've heard this one before Hawkeye, haven't you?
The patron saint always a man, a man a man, amen. . .
This paradigm, a perfect motif of alienation, standing out in relief against the mundanity of satisfaction. . .
And now the catching of the maternal breath, I am two weeks old and still breathing. . .
Lop-sided face, you'll remember dear reader, elongated head ha, was a bit of a handful in shape even then. . .
still traumatised maximus no doubt, dandling there in the maternal arms, still not feeding though. . .
brought up eventually on National Dried Milk. . .
The you that I am projecting towards in this increasingly massive text of self-pity has completely folded now since I'm talking about the total

abnegation of your spirit in that awful waiting-room of Dr Cox. . .
Yes my dear, he must have said, you'll have to use the precautions (to quote a Catholicism) the damning ray of full arrest looms on the horizon. . .
A companion for the little boy?
No, it cannot be. . .
the bowed psyche looks out of the window, a little tearful perhaps, forlorn mother trying not to think about the blunted possibilities, all logic refuted in the one simple statement. . .
And the fact that she trusted him, the doctor. . .
not as nowadays when you're liable to run out against or into any Dr Tom/Dick/Harry, this was 195- you remember, when it was the family doctor and he was almost family. . .
But a deadly serious warning Mrs A-----. . .
What if he (the doctor) had had a bad morning, wrong side of the bed and all that, had just been a little too anxious, or his car hadn't wanted to start, hadn't managed to get to the surgery. . .
hmm, someone else's advice, not taken not trusted, or not taken seriously enough perhaps?
A very different fate would befall my only sister unbegotten and so on. . .
Can these small strokes of machinations be even thought about?
You all remember the passenger on a doomed air flight, who suddenly gets a call. . .
your child is unwell, you should come home straightaway. . .
ah but do some of them ignore the call, get confused as some would put it, they miss the call of destiny's kind and pity-distributing hand?
The spirit of mother finally relenting in a gracious undertone of humility. . .
kind talks in the dark with Dad, the purchase of condoms in the tiny barber's shop, every rubber denouement a nail in the coffin of my sister's being. . .
I even had the same problem, it simply revisits generation after generation, this sort of stuff. . .
there is a third child of mine silently wailing out there in the elements of collective unconscious psyche, unborn, undifferentiated from the other noiseless mouthing in the next-to-infinite distance, uncreated, a genius child I like to think, but who knows?
Maybe I'd still be broody for a fourth, or fifth?
Some women friends who have given birth to a succession of boys, or girls, and long for one of the other. . .
And wait a minute, I could have had a brother, why do I never think about that?
It's because I'm obsessed, that's why. . .
Two brothers, not such a theme for this text, at all events, and then and then. . .
A leap of sixteen years.

And I'm the leaving home sort, a period not covered in this book, except for this little and quiet conversation, my mother can't even remember it now, but. . .
A shy talk on the threshold of some other pain memory I was about to conjure. . .
would I be upset if there was another?
What's she saying?
Is she pregnant again?
Well I don't know. . .
the change, the regularisation of menopause etc, I don't remember that, but somewhere now all her memory is bound up with me replying that I didn't need the interference, or something of the sort. . .
my books, records potentially torn/broken, you know the sort of selfish consideration dear reader. . .
We all have our boundaries of acceptance and mine were (still are) very small in
diameter. . .
my circles do not reach out, expand, unless forced to by happenstance or sorcery. . .
Anyway I withdrew, it was the delineation of a massive cycle in the overall spiral of you, sister. . .
Another chance, the last one actually, just sneaking by, after sixteen years safe condom use. . .
that's what it boils down to fer chrissakes, the way a condom is used, the chance we won't get the one that's pricked by the bored dispatch packer. . .
are psychic spirals really held together by this sort of mundanity?
No wonder some respected writers have insinuated that our existence is either absurd or totally arbitrary (check Camus again, I'm sure he's got something to say about it, Sam Beckett maybe, and so forth). . .
I've put the kibosh on the little sweep of destiny, finally folding its faded crumpled wings up and packing its bags. . .
on the computer terminal in limbo, the records are finally and unconditionally erased, it's a no go area, I'm afraid. . .
The last minuscule trail of ova whispering across the sky to a rendition of Satie's 'Gymnopedies' (orchestral version playing on the old tape-heads now, Mozart abandoned for a while). . .
there is derived in this liquefying, bloody and unbowed text a rejection of the sublime or dramatic (haha you've probably noticed), instead the graceful, comic and ironic (along to sarcastic, we've noted). . .
Yes I'm rather sure it would be uncle Erik I'd find at the end of a suitably mixed saxophone cocaine journey, Mr Hesse.

But I'm talking and you're not listening here. . .
what are you playing at?
Sit up at the back there!
Yes, though you're not even born, sister, can I help that?
In one sense it makes the pull more attractive. . .
to wonder how and when and where existence could have happened for you, am I to blame for this fantasy?
How can it intrude into the dreamlife without any suggestion of reality from me?
I'm poised at the cliff edge waiting for you to join alongside, can I wait that long?
The procession wheels past and off, I'm still dandling there half way off the avalanche, distracted, scratching my neck, these bloody waxen wings are damned heavy, and they rub. . .
I actually knew someone on the Roehampton course called Icarus, it was his middle name (preferred to Jeremy, and why not), talk about synchronicity, leave it out. . .
It all starts to happen when one gets the idea of some privileged motif or whole text in the brain. . .
suddenly and gradually too, all the coincidences start piling up and when they contract the investment of synchronous happenings. . .
I've got a theory (yes) that if our desire or obsession is strong enough, we attract these happenings, pull them towards us acausally. . .
they come to us, we no longer have to seek them out, we become the centres of powerful psychic disturbance very quickly and easily in these affairs. . .
Just the other day mayhap, Bun brings home a reading book from school, first one I've read with her for a while and what's it called?
I've been thinking a while on the old obsessional lines, know what I mean?
And its title 'Stories about sisters' could be a working title, Cavalier. . .
Yes yes, but I'm rambling, waffling, you know why?
Because there's no you here. . .
'Mum' isn't the addressee here strangely, and the unknown sister, it's not even 'before your names' is it?
I've lost the thread, when there's no incident to bite on of you in these splinters, I go to pieces myself. . .
yes, am splintered myself, perhaps that's why. . .
Maybe my own perception of you is splintered for a very similar reason, there's no me to interrupt the flow of your own narrative, I'm no longer even a wisp in the air, no form to build on, in dream or waking reality, ending up with you dear reader, dear listening Cavalier, the only 'you' left in this yawning gallery of reverberating
silence. . .
The ear imploded, the diary constructed of blank pages, the empty coffers

of the monarch, the place of grey desolation after the all-night revelry, the darkness closing in again, not a solitary soul, but on a vacuum, an uncompleted companionship. . .
yeah Aristophanes you mad fool, maybe you were right you bastard, ha ha.

Hawkeye:
poem for St Jude No 3

The third dream ecstatic of Hawkeye. . .
Now I watch while your dream becomes truly independent of mine, at this time you were having violent associations with astral rivals, women who you knew you could never meet, or love. . .
Your position similar to mine, always falling out with your own sisters. . .
as I could not get on with the lads, the boys. . .
Only once did you introduce me to the only woman you could call friend (by your definition) and in that two hours, sitting on the sofa with you, your friend supposedly friendly, talking, you were so entirely different. . .
a softer, rounded gentle blah blah. . .
Ah what's the use, it happened once, and not for me. . .
it was solely your own dream stakes, the selling world, the charm of the big big bourgeoisie. . .
The money down and let's take a runner. . .
that all changes, sooner than I think, no doubt.

'Pleasure runs a parallel' says the dream, 'absorption begins at home'. . .
that probably should be an opposite to charity, I presume. . .
though I can't get over the clinging meaning of being absorbed. . .
You called it “sinking into”. . .
it was the worst move one could make or rather the most vulnerable, if one was not emotionally involved or not supposed to be, at any rate. . .
At the same time it was the most exquisite and tender feeling, the occasional sinking to the depths at which you could not control the Refectory Mode, a little dependence to get you through another day in that world you know I despise. . .
but it's the one in which you've claimed and are claiming your stake. . .
'Never knew the softest playfulness' it says here, never knew it was really 'direct'. . .

not elliptical (as in my case, my talking around the point), it's 'near to the heart, but not obvious'. . .
We could write a book on that one alone. . .
where does all the time go in actual living, so that I cannot even annotate each separate direction of soul and idea?
Or should it just be left like that do you think?
You would say yes, except where reality intrudes just a bit too real for your comfort. . .
And withdrawal was necessary. . .
'The awe-ful syndrome of acquiescence kneeling before the rail of truth', that damned priest again, why must the confession intrude?
Yes let's forget about that dear sister, companionship cannot be founded on the wave of relief after guilt. . .
the rail, it's 'unbending, not yielding'. . .
In that old poem by Wyatt, the renaissance man, 'the grip of the cropped hair' creasing back through the scalp and then through the skull, and then through the life and death of a courtier. . .
that's my own skull you're radically dismantling by your grip on my hair, or is it my grip on yours?
Within passion, so difficult to tell. . .
'In his frozen look' (Wyatt's) as the courtier finally knows his courtly existence is to clamber up a very slippery pole (he mentions that in another poem). . .
You're the Queen, the icon, Hawkeye, with your gimlet persistence, yet also nonchalance. . .
and I've just the favourite sycophant of that moment, sometimes. . .
Oh sometimes it works that way, they hang around, those courtiers, on the street corners of subsistence, or is it subsidence ha?
For the chevalier, a different perspective. . .
an expected reward, if not in favours, the recognition of his detached high spirit, the true romantic endeavour and so forth. . .
yes, if not in favours, then the ray of white magic emitted from the eye of truth and hawk preyfulness, the sign that does not require verbalisation. . .
so that you Cavalier, have to talk completely off the point for hours, while I always talk around the point, around, maddeningly to the Hawkeye grip, whose view plainly is, why don't you get on with it?
'Maybe the door to heaven chinks open the same for your past, as the future' (bless its cottons) 'parades golden in the elemental darkness called distraction'. . .
I'd go along with that any time, as the split between birth trauma's light and dark continues to yawn, your moves towards independence. . .
and drawn towards the abyss too, you can't help it, despite the handmade lists of pro- active tasks on the wall, inviting yourself to become more of the complete and undistractable woman. . .

At the same time as burning the candles of dependence at three ends. . .
It's the sinking into, it's the affection, you've never had that sort, you are genuinely puzzled but would rarely admit it, why don't you admit it for once?
After you've gone, honey, after you've gone. . .
Nah not likely, too much to expect, except that one time in front of me. . .
No I can't even begin to tell yet, wait a few splinters and it'll come to me, fully formed hopefully, in search of its place in the pattern of metaphors slowly proliferating. . .
'Only glance at the proof, encased in flesh one more time, this time', this life this life, your only one too, what a coincidence if, if you should only ignore that purgatory claptrap, the winged mountain taking off for heaven, everybody clinging on. . .
You don't have to beat those extraordinary wings any more, to lift a mountain with your own flimsy faith, you are in fact floating up with the rest of them, automatically if you could only realise, safe to the eternal home, well perhaps, you think. . .
One night's rest away from your beating wings.

Pleasure runs a parallel.
Absorption begins at home.
Never knew the softest playfulness
was direct, near to the
heart, but not obvious.
The awe-ful syndrome of
acquiescence kneeling before
the rail of truth, unbending,
not yielding; the grip of the
cropped hair in Wyatt's frozen
look. Maybe the door to heaven
chinks open the same for
your past as the future parades
golden in the elemental
darkness called distraction.
Only glance at the proof: encased
in flesh one more time, this time.

Sparrow:
poem of avalanche No 4

My fantasy of you. . .
a poem of decided differences, a catalogue of reasons why I shouldn't attempt the photogenic smile. . .
Just a little left of central in the eye of God's camera hoho. . .
When you posed for me, the last week of the wretched course. . .
when all the cameras were out, click click, recording in denouement, trying to squeeze into a probably embarrassing moment all that had to be seen to be happening in nine months of spirited ennui. . .
you held an apple (which you were just about to eat, I presume) unconsciously, yes yes you were eating it when I accosted with (I thought) humour. . .
afterwards “does this seem like tempting you?”
You were saying, thrusting the core of fond nostalgia already seen, at my chin, which was lurking ashamedly behind the mask, the camera. . .
Did you ever tempt me?
I ask myself, the only person who is able to hear right now.

'The august mobility of certain stars as they sweep the sky. . .
Deepens according to your eye contact' which is connected, the look. . .
The look, we sit in your room, knees touching the image of knees, from the Rioja. . .
Your hair, thin to a degree I did not think possible. . .
fine really, why are you so embarrassed by it?
Which only increases the embarrassment of course. . .
No it's okay really, no alarm necessary. . .
'That which softens also welcomes at the break of day', the fineness of hair let down by flattening, smoothing, patting, just the right amount of stroking will carry the day. . .

that middle perfume, the foundation on a face that doesn't need it (am I stepping too far?)
Careful, you'll be auntie Sparrow with some of these young men, who am I kidding?
Or protecting from you?
But 'where is the vision that can tell who is the only one'?
Alone in the crowd, you say. . .
but we all feel that, alone in a room with three other people, yet not all-one. . .
well I should have thought so but no, you are unique, I can sense the overbearing possibilities of a psyche grown ripe and then still pretending to be ripe. . .
And then to feel lonely in a group, the bitterness stalking the smile, all above the counter and limiting to the newly found independence, we are strolling on a beach at midnight, except it's really the park, Richmond Park where deer would stroll off while we, passive, would stumble apart and awake against the current of the moon sweeping madly across the sky, diabolic and cheerful (the moon), swelling the horizon with kindness. . .
we looked up, lost our way, heard the hoofbeats in our breath, meandering solely to the strumming of the antler way, fuzzy hands in the moonlight locked away. . .
And last night you phoned, well this very night before sitting at the ritualistic Imperial 66 you phoned. . .
asked how I was, you were kind on the phone and cheery. . .
You wondered if I was upset about not really saying goodbye properly, although you were the one who said you hated goodbyes, paradox paradox. . .
the deer will come to within 20 yards, its suspicions confirmed by our lantern-jawed psyches, thinking they've come out to play, mad fools we are. . .
your rings glinted in the moonlight I remember, what are we doing here?
Are you the one, the only one, who will keep the contact of this waking reality, phone or no phone?
'Where is the vision that can tell?' etc, but it badly shook me, even this gentle chat, disembodied over the airwaves as it was because, why?
I sat and tried to think it through. . .
no good, upset the family more than the usual extended melancholy, and couldn't explain if I wanted to anyway. . .
I spent a long evening trying to explain to an (imagined) patient audience about this very text, mountains of hope yet instants of fear, one text which, as I write, is secret to all eyes except Cavalier. . .
The paradox being that as soon as you do read this word, in the process of time, the concealment will be a little less, a little less formal and expected. . .

But it was not understood by this evening phantom audience, as I knew it would not be. . .
Yah yah I need a word processor, all this umming and ahhing when a new (first draft) page is to be fitted. . .
book readers kindly note, if you are reading this crumb of confidence, if it ever comes out, well it must have come out if you're reading this as a book reader, but if you aren't and this page is mouldering unseen, in a nether drawer of my dossy post-marriage squalor in Chiswick or Acton or somewhere like that, I'm sorry but you're a mere figment of my distorted and disordered and definitely neurotic imagination. . .
Anyway I'm. . .
This very text, upset by the contact, very normal between two friends, but wait until I tell you, perhaps I shouldn't tell you, shouldn't buttonhole you into accepting or rejecting your role as a participant in my sordid life yeah yeah. . .
Although I did tell you Sparrow, about the Greek holiday/terrorist dream thing, about the dreadful decision and waking up then, remember?
But you seemed to think of it as no account, were you serious?
Though why did it shake you, why did it shake me only?
Only 24 hours on, it will clear, it will clear yes, nothing will interrupt the gradually lengthening flow of the words describing and exorcising. . .
therapeutic they say, what a joke. . .
But this morning, yes terrible writer's cramp, not a word. . .
though I did some decorating, it's all the same breath, good old manual work, and felt much better afterwards mmm. . .
And oh yes lots of cheese just before going to bed the night arriving, makes Jack a very restless boy indeed. . .
this morning realised with a pang I was trying to induce dreamtime about you. . .
instead all that was received was a spotty and stupidly lifelike rendition of our last days at Roehampton, dreams like a letter and the spirit of compensation, good old Dr Carl. . .
The compensation for sordid reality, a soothing offering of serendipitous sanity and adventure with a companion in dreamtime, no imagination at all, no unconscious elements to spice it up, no tapestries of unstruck music or alphawave logic and beauty and so on. . .
But your phone calls (I was forgetting myself) will they continue?
I rather hope so, in an imp of the perverse kind of way. . .
what could be better than to be offset from a cosy groove of prose-writing at its glummest?
Intellectual disturbance, changing growth of concrete into abstract. . .
terms loosely used by Piaget, good for the brain he reckoned. . .
And, as I sit and type this draft (the third) company with Bun, french knitting on the sofa, the Friend out working (waitressing for the evening)

and Killing Joke the contemporary music accompaniment, 'a Love like blood' very appropriate, a gentle spring evening much later on in Gurnard than the initial (first draft) narrative. . .
as the days and months slip forward meshing indissolubly with each other. . .
as draft overlaps with draft, fragments of each interlocking to form a formless whole (or is it just a collection of parts?). . .
or not even a collection, a vague assortment of parts that wouldn't want to know each other. . .
Just the Bunner and I, peaceful. . .
As only the blood-related would ever hope and pray to be.

Okay, but back to biting the bullet. . .
'Simply with the eye noble enough to annunciate, no more', it says here in this poem I wrote to you, never showed you though. . .
just when I thought there would be no more decent communication, just hours before the first meet with Hawkeye (the sleaze party doll) what a turmoil, but where is the vision again etc?
'The past ferments to the future', it's just such a juicy brew with you in the centre of it twirling. . .
the past 'it leaves gaps in the wood-panelled fence we used to parade in the old dark
days'. . .
Why it's a fairy tale with Peter Forkbeard (sorry Sparrow, after post-seconddraft phonecall, but I've got to put in true hyprocrises on my part, as well as the usual absurd fantasies about other men, standard writerly paranoias when they steer round the objects of their affections yes). . .
the Forkbeard, your lounging German-music graduate. . .
Yes I'm deliberately playing Satie now, 'Four preludes flasques', just to be awkward because I know, in an impish of the perverse way again, that he does not understand the French 1910s temperament as regards the lightness of counterpoint attracted to the Parisian life. . .
For him, and by oblique definition you (as the influenced), nothing better than climactic waves of sound, constant as exemplified by old Russian Rachmaninoff, also Brahms and Lizst and all the big deutschmark points safely in their corner of safe and romantic musics, oh the Rhenish heaven of their tipple devaluing the breathing space with their phony version of true romance, sonorous chords slapped up with the saccharine and schmaltz equivalent of the shovel. . .
Interruptions here to express that dodgy fairy-tale aspect of your belief in the quasi- romantic intensity?
An intense cultural heritage as a package destined for the evangelists, though at the moment tied up in quarantine. . .

'Leave the nostalgia to others' says this poem that I'm converting to a perverse prose for both you Sparrow and you gentlest reader, for your delectation and so forth. . .
I'm stretching it out and adding bits by the score. . .
this is not an obscure rendition of a song to a paragraph or two, or twelve, merely for the sake of a sheer conversion job. . .
it's about prose, although I'm using the material justifiably I think. . .
anyway, it's all new, washing whiter than. . .
Black, or dirty grey at least. . .
hence I've not thought of this genre before, bit of an original hoho, well only in those seedlings that desire leaves trailing fulsome in its wake, of a hot summer's day
yum. . .
Leave the nostalgia to others, I said delinquently, propped against the bar of useless proposals, ducks and drakes dashing here and there. . .
leave it out altogether I said six months ago while pleading, bleeding for the muse. . .
(Okay I lost her/him a long time back, though occasionally I weep forlornly into the half- mooned night for its reassurance, the concept of the muse I mean). . .
Leave the nostalgia to others, what a joke. . .
that's all I've been doing for the past three weeks, eternity of three weeks, writing this (first draft) manuscript. . .
Dropping those ever-accelerating crumbs of confidence in a Hansel-ish rendition of the stray abode of folk story, his point of view entirely. . .
the version which tries to find a way out of the forest (don't forget 'in media res' old chaps) with adored adored sister Gretel, don't eat that chocolate for God's sake!
The text you see, or probably won't see (is this sentence for the chop on another couple of drafts?)
In front of your eyes at the station bookstall (ha ha)?
In your learned middle-class friend's study or workshop, yeah the coffee table syndrome. . .
Slap slap!
Ah that's better, a little carried away there, can't be having that can we?
It is full of nostalgia however. . .
perhaps it's the fond sort championed by Hawkeye and not the pressing on the nerve stuff beloved of the usual run of prose fiction warblers ('that damned mob of scribbling women' fumed Nat Hawthorne, he should have known better, making an anti- feminist remark 150 years before the fashion of New Age Man, he's been retrospectively regretting it in the eyes of certain Brit and French womanists ever since, the shade of his genius strolls on however). . .
Ah yes throw in everything but the stainless steel sink, they won't mind, the

postmodernist bastards are used to it. . .
but are they readers still?
Tapeheads?
So they say, I'm not so sure. . .
you all look remarkably normal and stodgy to me, O just the type to want a straight narrative linear approach, what am I saying?
Gosh you very types won't even have progressed to this part. . .
only the hard core of madmen/women and those others happy to be insulted will have reached this watershed in the theory and practice of fiction-buttonholing and so forth. . .
Nostalgia, oh yes I remember that word with fondness, I wonder if in days to come we'll look back on this 1980s craze for the old nostalgia, turn it up. . .
ho a cerebral joke there, very good. . .
Leave the nostalgia to others he said in a disciplined sort of voice 'in case the darkness engulfs', which it will do. . .
'Nevertheless they recommend loose and periphery mixtures of friendship as a catalyst to clairvoyance. . .
you can tell that's a poetic bit, can't you?
Well you should be able to, are you listening at the back?
The meanderings of an old mind in a young(ish) body, the spirit washes greyer than grey and it's still deepening, the outlook poisonously compensatory for the shallow grind of mouth-to-mouth betrayal. . .
look how many sisters he's looking for, all at once!
The poison in the pen methinks, nowhere else. . .
have a look in the inkwell for the spirit of relief washing blithely the senses undertaken originally in animosity, the battlehorn sounding grim over the bloodied fields, in this case washing redder than red could be in the imagination, hands reaching with the sky towards oblivion and all that, engulfing the darkness certainly. . .
not sure about the rest of it, light is pretty murky too, the meanderings of a poisoned mind needing cleansing. . .
The clairvoyance certainly a leitmotif for our time, and these crazed interior reflections embodied within the epistolary form are of necessity fragments themselves (do you remember the modernist music piece '. . .agm. . .'?)
I look back into that damned mirror. . .
Mirror mirror, on my soul, who's the four left who can wash no-colour and clarity of vision into the tortured self?
Mirror mirror, ace of vanities, let the troll organise wicked excursions with an imprint left for sure. . .
Mirror mirror, I'm lonely for you, where is the image born with, and still (somewhere) not decayed?
It is threatening to crack completely. . .

some of the shards that I've painstakingly pieced back together, most of yours Sparrow in particular, are coming unstuck of their own accord, through loss of contact, memory unwinding itself back to the primal, jumping the rails of mirror etiquette, coughing up the washes redder type blood of reminiscence without acceptance. . .
'Come back into the fold, all is forgiven', literally, yes periphery mixtures of friendship, that just about sums it up, shame that. . .
Shame that none of you know each other, and I'm not about to introduce, in my time- honoured fully-paid-up-member of the fiction writers' guild, in the narrative structure (even for storytime excitement) usually and simply a little distorted view of the life versus art syndrome. . .
'Seeing for miles and measured miles', this sounds more like Hawkeye though it's really really you, little one. . .
indeed 'as the perspective distorts, you are the one that can heal, yes bringing the horizon together' with your phone calls for instance. . .
With your (holy) visits (maybe). . .
the voice of previously assembled sanity building its grove in the wilderness. . .
the domestic nest instinct hear the heart of the town. . .
No overcoming of shyness necessary, just a straightforward acclimatising on the part of the human companion, so that you settle harmless on the arm. . .
Not an appendage I hasten to add, but well an image in the mirror can never be an appendage, an accretion. . .
either apart or kissing the mirror with the same part of the body glued in skating and slippery incest. . .
Sparrow, your poem ends here, what do you think of it?
It's all yours. . .
That moon certainly has a lot to answer for.

> The august mobility of certain stars as
> they sweep the sky; deepens according
> to your eye contact. That which softens
> also welcomes at the break of the day.
> But where is the vision that can tell
> who is the only one? Simply with the
> eye noble enough to annunciate, no more,
> the past ferments to the future, leaving
> gaps in the wood-panelled fence we used to
> parade in the old dark days. Leave the nostalgia
> to others though, in case the darkness
> engulfs. Nevertheless they recommend loose
> and periphery mixtures of friendship as
> a catalyst to clairvoyance. Seeing for
> miles and measured miles as the perspective
> distorts, you are the one that can heal,
> yes, bringing the horizon together.

Sisters:
showering without the shadow

Ever since the beginning of this text there has existed a desire to report the current
dream. . .
it's only the latest in a long line of the same recurring one, the quest for comfort and meaning with (or for) the companion that is you. . .
The last few mornings, lying in a little later, I almost caught the essential part of this dream, the last fading micro-moments of its force. . .
and then by dozing further and recalling the part of it I most wanted to see again, being careful to try and uncover only what was necessary to this tale. . .

But of course dreamtime does not work out so neatly, and to order. . .
This morning, while envisaging once more the lost one slipping out of vision, at the side of the unrolling portrait which is my own continuous cracked mirror (the marginalised hammering of desire at the neck of accord) I saw you for a fleeting second without the embrace of derision. . .
Just a fleet-second passing by. . .
the velocity slowing right down in a wide-angle chance to absorb whatever it was. . .
beauty?
I don't know, but the conscious rightness of the quest placed in the position where I had no choice but to follow the golden thread. . .
And somehow at the conclusion of all this, an animal. . .
Not only submissive, domestic, almost like a sheep in its intense-eyed innocence and fidelity mixed with a surly admittance of the domesticity imposed. . .
but also when roused, the snarl of a wolf avid for revenge. . .
The animal to be captured. . .
there were many standing in a field, well a back garden to be precise, reminding me of a garden in Somerset, where so many thoughts of the sister first sprang to life, a dubious life. . .
In this garden the taming of the animal, to such an extent that flesh was bloodied, bones extracted, the body broken. . .
yet not to be eaten, merely to be defeated by detachment. . .
Sounds like the Dr Carl type shadow doesn't it?
This I realised as I appealed to my fellow statues in the field. . .
help me to destroy the animal I said, though they only looked blankly, a pastiche of different statues I had hated, while the animal slowly but then quickly dragged its body away for escape. . .
These statues then, stone archetypes, elements of the old unconscious psyche all of them, looking to me for a decision which I could never give. . .
but driven to desperation, I thought of a hammer, rapping on its already shredding head. . .
could it crush the remaining, irritating consciousness with one blow?
And did that moral vegetarianism, with which the smartass is imbued, strike its note of lofty snubnosed musak?
Cavalier, with his text written on vivisection and its damnation, will know what I'm talking about here. . .
Asking for the hammer, not finding it anywhere. . .
the fruitless search, thinking still, and independently of the decision in Greece with Sparrow, is dream a sacrifice in compensation, or not?
Although this situation wasn't entirely in the same mould, because I had the hammer in my hand all the time, yet only just now in the dream realising it. . .

I took it decisively and smashed the animal's peeling skull. . .
it withered and disappeared straight away, with only that cross-sectioned snarl and shifty, prepossessing look as the eyes disappeared into the vortex (black and white) of death forever. . .
my animal, my shadow, disappearing without trace, without the nostalgic satisfaction of a trace element no doubt. . .
Without memory or nostalgia, fond or otherwise, the great melodramatic cutting pain across the stomach, distended, dying. . .
And then, immediate transformation. . .
The last steps of an incredibly long and arduous mountain walk. . .
the walk so straight up and between two sides of a cutaway scree. . .
looking from above, so that all the distance down to the beginning was to be seen in one giant curving path, way down hundreds of feet. . .
Just the last step away from that climb to a bleak moorland road careening across the open and heathery expanse. . .
An urgent need to take a shower, to wash the blood of the shadow from my body, but the shower cubicle is across the road. . .
after I reach it, there's something wrong, the cubicle is immense, it stretches away in parallel lines as far as I can see. . .
though not only that, it's transparent, there's no protection from a modesty. . .
I'm going to have to publicly shower. . .
there are no people to watch or ogle, but I'm naked to the landscape, which for a confessed solitary is even more revealing. . .
Cutting away the shadow, I cut away also the possibility of immediate companionship. . .
is this the same sacrifice reversed that I could have taken for Sparrow?
The two incidents seem entirely unconnected, yet. . .
I could go on washing in that shower but the psyche or whatever it is that is the 'I' in that dream has had enough. . .
I'm woken up, somehow, no sweat this time though, just an uncomfortable half-hour listening to my doubts about my own sanity. . .
perhaps it is all in the mind haha, maybe it's all to do with something comparatively mundane, the new job starting in two months' time, the family troubles and tribulations, my own getting out of bed late, the guilt the guilt and so forth. . .
And also that manic urgency to find out what it all means. . .
The smartass syndrome strikes again. . .
Never silent, it bubbles under the skin repulsively.

But where does this leave you, sisters?
Are you somehow banished with the shadow (which is always supposed of the same sex as the analysand?)
A sort of mildness in exorcism that derides the dramatic denouement?

A bit of a squib I should say. . .
and from the way you're all looking at me, not even a part of the plot, whatever that mangled object might be now, just a curious excuse to indulge in a bit of gay psychological repartee, passes the time and so on. . .
Are these bloody dreams significant or am I, and/or you, barking, coughing up the wrong tree here?
Is it to be Bill Blake's 'poison tree' that slays the man who thinks he is Bill's friend, or at least says he is?
While knowing full well that there is treachery and malice at the root of the labyrinthine earth which sustains the tree of mystery. . .
Incidentally Bill, disconnected-in-time pal, there was yet another pundit, on Channel 4 tonight, I won't mention the name, though ex-Oxbridge prof of poetry (he thinks) who misinterpreted your placing of 'Jerusalem' again. . .
I should write a boiling letter it makes me so angry, but I can't be bothered ultimately so to speak, his (Bill's) soiled soul speaks to me out of a crumpled earth, grave askew (still) in the Non-conformists' cemetery, Bunhill fields, City road, East London, forlorn and still asking for the mercy of a decent hearing. . .
this crumb also for you Bill, holding hands in the eternal presence, drifting your flaky way past the statues in the sky, once again in movement, once again flexible to the unfolding of our density, in order to accommodate your vision, chink by chink, splinter of magicked glass by splinter, echoing the lighted path in a temporary eternity we call survival.

Hawkeye:
poem of impeccable flight

Hawkeye, the last note I left, promising you flight from the mundanity of immunised salesman-catching. . .
a poem on a postcard. . .

I had left others' poetic work on them before but now, since I wouldn't see you again, one of my own. . .
you accepted, caught the breath at a secret hour, revolved without moving, filed away in the book you wouldn't open for years. . .
The last of the Circle to commit to paper, and only maybe. . .
they say (your toadies) that you lived life to the full, well I don't know.

'All the time gone hoping for a change of heart', that's certainly true, I can't help thinking back to when you poured the jug of water over the unfortunate who incurred your wrath, a classic incident in the Refectory Mode. . .
he became the unforgivable after breaking two fingers (literally) of someone's heart (your confidante SJ). . .
we had all ignored it (that was the root of your real anger). . .
And then my quiet visit to you, hours alter (even later, typing acausal error) when I had that anger as an aching jaw in my hands, cupped with your misery. . .
for however long it took, however long it takes for anger to subside. . .
two hours, four hours, three days, it can vary I know, but then as they say, who am I?
'Satisfaction was always left out to dry', under the cracking oil paint of the sky that your priest and salesmen made for you, every day of the week. . .
Once again the effort to be the tribal chief's favourite, though you were really the Queen (in heart) without them knowing, giving the natural credit due, courtiers waiting in line again. . .
After hiding from the world for a third of your life, what does the future protest?
The search for a job, a lot of money, security. . .
but most of all the son you've never had, the replacement for your own sister that, as mine, has not appeared. . .
In that sense kindred souls, we sweated out the via negativa in our wonderful schmaltz, did it matter?
Your obsessions are only yours. . .
we are all penned in by our own little foibles and scratchings in the dark. . .
Your openness does not exclude the minor matter of our collective and yet singular death someday. . .
Some day. . .
the religion, that's why. . .
One more leap into the sincere dark before you admit, as you did, that you were lost, always and always lost, what can one say?
What can I say?
Just the same as I always do, but less covered up. . .
the concealed giving way, finally unmasked, the healing hand brought to its

senses and the humility accosted and kept small by the largeness of its task of symbiosis. . .
I finally lost my Puffined smartass contemplating your beauty in a reduced silence.

'One day, wings will rise from the parched remains to ascend simply', yes they will, not only in our own dreams. . .
You never discussed yours except to say you often dreamt of somebody close to me whom you had never met. . .
Sorcery, perhaps?
Yes, ascend simply. . .
'Ascend simply, accessibly and without default', one more soul for 'impeccable flight', despite our ridiculous ideas about about constitutes devotion, honesty, reality and so on. . .
The way is up and out, the way forgiven for its insularity and possible structures of infirmity. . .
Once again the postcard.

All the time. . .
A chance for impeccable flight, every breath.

All the time
gone hoping
for a change
of heart;
satisfaction
was always
left out to
dry.
One day,
wings will rise
from the parched
remains to
ascend simply,
accessibly and
without default:
impeccable flight.

Cavalier:
the shimmering lake of glass

A quote from Ovid the well known exile, in this fragment. . .
'They were not all exactly alike, but there was a resemblance, such as

sisters should have'. . .
He's talking about the daughters of Doris, implausibly. . .
Later on in that same book (number two) of 'Metamorphoses', he rattles on about Narcissus at some length. . .
so we have the two major concealed obsessions of this floating text, sisters and mirrors, all wrapped up already in one neat slab of an epic. . .
Cavalier you know this one's for you, has your name inscribed in golden letters on the sliver. . .
haha already Cavalier, how can you possibly expect me to title this chain of crumbs 'Mirrorgames'?
Where are the sisters, or should I say where is the sister, in this figurine of penmanship?
In that throwaway tone of yours, used in accepting run-of-the-mill marriage proposals or of alerting a person's view of literary life almost single-handedly, you disdain to reflect on the metaphysical mechanics involved. . .
perhaps you aren't aware of them on this mundane conscious plane anyway. . .
it needles you to suppose that anyone would want to know ah. . .
But to find a title with sisters and mirrors, this is strange, got any more ideas?
It's going to be a long haul with all this material. . .
you've got a year or so to come up with a suitable and genuine attempt, if you should so wish. . .
But back to Narcissus ah ha, what a sickeningly self-opinionated lad and no mistake, leave it out etc. . .
The storyteller says and I quote (sorry Mary M Innes, translator, this is lifted verbatim), 'poor foolish boy, why vainly grasp at the fleeting image that eludes you?
The thing that you are seeing does not exist. . .
only turn aside and you will lose what you love, what you see is but the shadow cast by your reflection, in itself it is nothing, it comes with you, and lasts while you are there, it will go when you go, if go you can'. . .
Why do I feel squirmy and hackly up the shivermetimbers when I read and re-read this bunch of opinions?
When the poor lad turns up beyond death's door in the Stygian wastes, it says here quote 'his sisters, the nymphs of the spring, mourned for him, and cut off their hair in tribute to their brother' unquote. . .
what a charmer, unbelievable my son, and so on. . .
You all know the story as Ovid himself would say, no need to bore you with the details old chap, there's something in 'Paradise lost' about Eve looking in the glass of the lake, that is definitely a whole another story, but see later, dear reader.

Meanwhile my dreams of sister figures have entirely diminished while I've been writing this novel stuff. . .
you realise this Cavalier, what does this mean?
Am I as much as dreaming on the page, compensating as it were?
It's down to the disgraceful fact that I have lots of those slumbering in the morning after everybody else has got up type of dreams, laziness stretched out in the cocoon of adventure and chaotic invention. . .
where there are many brothers (this morning I was one of four brothers and the others were the royal 3 of the queen of England, double-breasted suits and all that). . .
This is the brotherhood taken to the limit and it's not fair, forced to write the truth, which is not good for the fictional imagination. . .
What am I to do?

And in case you're wondering, I don't have a Narcissus complex. . .
and I don't long to look in the mirror to see how beautiful my thoughts are, and however much I try to use the typewriter as this mirror, I am bound to be totally unsuccessful at prising out any form of information, imaginative content or private exocism-cum- enterprise of the psyche. . .
What do I get but a lot of writer's block?
Just now, leaping to see if my taping of the 'Marat Sade' on radio 3 is finished, that should provide some suitably unwholesome material. . .
perhaps I won't be able to listen, to stomach it, a bit sensitive about that sort of thing. . .
Anyway the Narcissus debate is simple, should he have looked?
Was he compelled to look, and if so, what by?
Doesn't say in Ovid, he's just a simple story-teller (he says). . .
And what a story, when he (Narcissus) dies, he just pines away by the side of the pool. . .
no messing about boy, just collapses heartstricken, chaotic is definitely not in it. . .
Difference is that this mirror's old, tried and tested, it does not yield the same psychic shock as the lake, although it does share one property. . .
it shimmers and although solid glass, will shimmer in exactly the same way as the pool when agitated. . .
That's precisely what I'm doing when evoking these nostalgias, memoirs and fantasies. . .
everything becomes fatally stirred by the hands of documentation, of amanuensis. . .
o my soul, do you tremble when the hand of the fates attempts to shear your ropes from their moorings?
(Sorry, sailing metaphor again). . .

Attempts to snip the cord from your life and so forth. . .
What do you think Cavalier, yawning with suppressed boredom in Chigwell? Does your view of the beloved shimmer in lapsed time, or is it lapsing in the present tense?
Is that what your epistolary book is all about, or on second thoughts, let me ask you a candid question, is it?
That question I didn't have the patience or courage to ask, when sitting all night practically, in the cell-block room known as B6 (Cavalier squalor). . .
Plenty of time to insist, but no somehow the subject was too maudlin for my smartass ears or tears. . .
your sensitivity was betrayed by the mouth of coarseness from the mauling enquiries of a bad sleuth. . .
When it's self-love that shimmers, and pitches and lurches out of focus, God help us, except we are so deluded usually that we can't see that it's self-love because it's always projecting on to someone else unlucky enough to have got hitched up to us in some unfortunate way in the past. . .
the odd word, the knowing look, the hand extended for the dance of life ha. . .
yes I'm thinking of the superb painting by Edvard Munch. . .
You might know it, it's a real satire, all those entranced wooden, thickly pained and amorphous swirling non-dervishes of the Norwegian suburbs imbued with a hairy patina of glutinous self-guilt, having turned away 180 degrees from any kind of self- love, a revulsion born of the ultimate kinds of self-delusion possible. . .
And that's us, this is psychic realism at its most powerful. . .
the little polite and pristine dance of recognition that you have been led up the garden path by the stranger (of whatever sex). . .
no shimmers here, just a bit further into the sticky mire. . .
the fumbling around for a sort of funerary air in that fetid room of artificial gaiety and festival gone completely flat, curdles, rancid, so completely that no one can even
remember what it was like to celebrate the fact. . .
And there we are, gazing at the mirrors held up in one another's faces, not even looking at the eyes, but in a position half way up our priorities, so devastatingly missing the point of it all. . .
Only call and I will come I said to you, not you Cavalier as far as I know, certainly all the four second-person protagonists of this little jaunt into fairytaleland. . .
Will you ever call for help, any of you?
Just asking, and if you do I'll be looking steadily at my (or is it your?) Reflection, just as steadily being turned to a Medusa-h(a)unted stoniness, agitated beyond belief into some sort of submission. . .
the whole worry and paranoia of this book channelled into forcefully finding

out what sort of submission. . .
oh Cavalier, read on read on. . .
What might be found in the tomb of transmission.

Puffin:
Momma's stare

With a strange and late Beethoven perfecting away on the old JVC stereophonics in the background (third draft, it's Andrew Poppy's 'the Beating of wings', '32 Frames for orchestra' and 'Listening in cadenza')
I'll give you a clue dearest readers. . .
it's opus 131, one of those diffident, difficult late Ludwig chamber things with melancholy, great for late summer foragings into the murky past as it shakes through and beyond the steaming memory banks of the night. . .
Tune in with me and start imagining what it's like to be churning out this stuff at speed on the old typewriter. . .
when you read a book, do you ever imagine what goes on in the writing of it?
This is not an accusation (for a change) though it might turn out to be a sarcasm eventually, but a quiet question. . .
Well I've been dropping lots of different clues and now another one. . .
What's this got to do with the story, your earnest narrative?
No such luck, this shard is strictly self-reflexive. . .
it's being written because I'm writing it, but since the Author is Dead and I'm not (yet), this puts me in a quandary, deconstruction-wise. . .
Just surrender and be a tapehead basically, thanks Jean Baudrillard for that one, geez this text is turning into a tissue of infinitely regressing quotations, long live Sterne the vicar and so on. . .
Anyway I promised the wedding some fragments ago and you shall have it. . .
so I suppose you can skip the next few pages if you're squeamish about that sort of thing or if you blub at the wrong times in these sort of services. . .
But I'm afraid it's kind of crucial or at least relevant to the embarrassment of structure in this here post-modernist ragbag of a self-conscious attempt at prosody. . .
Now you remember I was telling you about Edie darling, the screech owl sourpuss Momma of sweet sister Puffin. . .

well I'll move on a year and a half now, we're sort of established, half a house in sunny Southsea, a thriving little business, the wholefoods, wake up at the back there!
The usual trembles but you've come round to my way of thinking Puffin, what a smartass I thought I was underneath all that practical/spiritual bullshit. . .
it was all in vain fellows, I was just projecting the old anima drivel, replacing you as an anti- mother figure, because I'd always had such a quiet firm-lined deal from my own Mum and that's a fact. . .
Though the other fact was, I'd never met Momma. . .
Edie darling, will you forgive me if I drag your name through the mud?
I'm sure that underneath that sourpuss sullen wrinkled cloak of a face, you were unconsciously radiating the eternal lightness of being (thanks Milan K) but I never saw it I confess. . .
Eighteen months and not a visit. . .
implorings, gestures, pleadings and finally to some avail. . .
Actually can I butt in here a moment (third draft copy speaking). . .
there's an awfully strange feeling, coldness in the room, I've felt it a few times when typing this out, when nobody else has been around, the Friend taking a trip out, kids safely tucked up. . .
And a cold presence in the room, makes me look around, almost a physical intensity of strangeness, just to see if there is a figure, which is absurd, still. . .
And there never is, not that I can see, I felt it just then again, as I type these very words you read, 6 April 1990 [and 27 December 2017], my life, grandfather a spiritualist medium God help my soul. . .
And then the feeling fades usually. . .
Why me, why it, why you?
And finally to some avail she drove down from London with smarmy Sid the stepfather, the handbag salesman, and pronounced the official disgust, yes the royal version. . .
We all had to sit through a whole afternoon of uncomfortableness, intense hours, while we served the tea in mugs, remember Puffin?
And wholefood muffins/shortbread or some such, revulsion in her mind no doubt. . .
Suddenly with her sitting there the old place did look shabby I must admit, indescribably so in fact, the more so every uncomfortable minute slouching by. . .
In both senses, in terms of very much, and in terms of we couldn't put our finger on it, but she did (metonymically) with her analogic white glove with which she gave sour glances round the room, shuddering the while. . .
Sid with his absurd stories to cheer things up, to paper over the ghastly and widening cracks of silence, but they (the stories) were gone downhill from the start. . .

Oh what a situation, I wish we had Celine here right now to spend ten fun-packed pages reiterating the entire absurdity of the folly of inviting people that you know will hate you from the start, to tea. . .
The height of absurdity, but I had to do it, for form's sake. . .
we were serious, I mean about living together, we had the goods on destiny or so we thought. . .
we were confident, weren't we?
Blah, until that woman walked in, then our collective mental knees started quibbling and dibbling and fibbling outrageously. . .
The tea mug shook in my hand, as I lurched from one embarrassment to the next. . .
always ready with the glibly ineffectual remark, praying for the clock to travel faster around its allotted clockface, while I gasped short for the fresh air of togetherness or work. . .
Collapsing like a true brother and sister afterwards, we re-arranged our pooping psyches and set sail on the storm-tossed seas of inlawship, and there was harmony there sweet sister, there's no doubt, and we hung together on this one, we were Hermaphrodite, the two people made one by the intense embracement of totally kindred souls. . .
Creeping exile Ovid again. . .
and the guilt of quoting from books one is currently (first draft) reading, it won't happen again blah. . .
The sense of being totally tied to influence, can we ever escape?
Stop looking shifty at the back there and pay attention. . .
So a year or passes, we're on the way, I will describe the wedding, or perhaps some
other. . .
Because every day was an adventure of sorts, though I've got to sieve through the relevant material, I owe it to you gentle reader, you're putting up with so much. . .
how can I not pull out the relevancies for you, from this mass of dross we call collectively living, n'est-ce pas?
Yes, relevancies for the theme, a bit of incest, near rape, definitely kidnapping, it's all in this one story of hermaphrodite longing. . .
I remember a three-corner arch-powerful conversation at Roehampton, between Simon the Snail (Pal version two), the Sneer (alias the Flounce, aka JC). . .
I'd known Simon six months as one of the boys and had never told him I was married before, was he surprised when I started in talking about you to his friend, Puffin. . .
For nearly two hours I blotted Sneer's consciousness with tales of Jewish guilt and the stagefright of being exposed to the tortures of living in such a family. . .
She told me a couple of months later that she still hadn't completely

recovered. . .
she hadn't realised anyone had lived so needlessly complicated a life, so she said. . .
I told her, baby that's only a splinter of it you found there. . .
what can one exchange in a single evening of what goes on in a life, or maybe she could, and all her friends too, perhaps. . .
And that's just the internal workings of a psyche disordered with the traumas of having to justify one's soul in this cesspit of a world, with no mercy allotted to the pure in heart. . .
And when one combines these insights/revelations/abandonments/epiphanies with another person's, really combine them or rather have them combined, in that once or twice a lifetime effort of actually relating fully to someone else or as nearly to the full as we can be strained. . .
A whole life of mundanity and compromising, anything to stuff one's face with enough psychic tranquillisers to keep on living and yet not live for one second of it. . .
Why are you surprised Sneer, or anyone really, merely because you're apt to compromise, like the rest of the unique ones we are?
Though you don't entirely as the rest of us, and that's a fact. . .
we hurt so much sometimes in the spiral of duty to the kindred spirit, I'm counting myself in, don't worry or feel ashamed for me. . .
But my fate took it in your hands Puffin, to confront totally. . .
yes I know I've fondly admitted to smartassing my way into all these obsessions with sisters and mirrors and suchlike, but I'm going down on the record here as admitting to a hearty fullstop on that one as I consider the other side of the coin. . .
Who is responsible?
Is it a straight you or me or are there more complex cross-statements going on here which damn both sides to a share in the fun of double-dealing?
I know it's that way really, but part of the wind-up is to pretend it isn't. . .
Okay in this book I'll pretend it's you that's to blame. . .
and in this book I'll pretend that I am too sometimes, so we'll have a nice meat'n'two veg story at any rate. . .
But here I am being the awkward customer again tsk tsk, I'm asking for it by swapping around my options from splinter of glass to splinter of glass, because I'm saying in this white heat moment of psychic writing that everyone's to blame. . .
a universal, me thee and the third person too. . .
And at the same time were blameless. . .
this is not entirely an original declaration or else there'd be no damned philosophy at the most elemental or elementary level, but the smashed mirror converts the comparative truth of philosophical speculation to an uncertain, spreading stain of distortion which blots out any hope of

regaining what's lost. . .
And why should we except to recoup our losses or restore our sense of moral righteousness to recover ourselves from the burden of blame?
Do we owe it to anybody, does anybody owe it to us?
What if Jean (we are all tapeheads) Baudrillard is somewhat correct and we are all just that little space of palimpsest, tucked away invisibly in the machine that we all know how to use (on someone else of course)?
Where's the blame there, from the tape machine manufacturer?
Ho just a thought Cavalier and I know you're waiting to burst in with the dread of Kant's theory of moral autonomy and the way John Dewey would destroy any of this argument with his educational philosophy on wheels, though that awaits your non- cool rationality in another sphere. . .
you'll say it so much better than anyone else, in twice as many looping sentences that have no verbs to speak of. . .
Yes, relevant material. . .
well, so to the wedding. . .
We wanted a quiet sort of dignified affair, but the problem was we had two houses and couldn't mix the two. . .
The Jews wouldn't toddle along to a church, and as I wasn't ready to be declared a Jew, even in name. . .
Poor Auntie Freda, she had such a time trying to be the only decently behaved relative. . .
offering support and succour and all that, we never knew whether her fond encouragements for me to learn how to be a proper Yid (technically and with all the legal trimmings) were her own isolated regard for me and the sweet sister (against the grain of her own in-laws, Edie and Sidney) or that she was goaded on by them to ensnare me into the pit of Judaism. . .
It did not enter our heads to imagine it was the latter until some years later, after the kidnapping etc, but it might have been possible, despite all of her preventative protestations involving hatred of the finest degree and ultimate disdain towards her relatives, but then I found out this was de rigueur between almost all of the Jews, if you got to know one really well as an outsider, they'd begin to tell you all these amazingly stretched fables about how uncle Bernie was a total screwball and so forth. . .
When poor old Bernie was only trying to earn a crust my life. . .
Yes it was shabby, very shabby, but I'm exhausted and I've got to write a letter to dear Cavalier (whom you've not met) about this second batch of manuscript material that has flowed awkwardly off the pen-substitute these last few days. . .
Over and out, au revoir, this means we'll meet again, perhaps. . .
You must have been reading for an hour or so, take a break you've had enough for one evening. . .
Fer Chrissakes how much more of this angst can you take?
I'll make a deal with you, dear reader. . .

put the script down now and I'll run away for a few days' well-earned solitude, and try to dredge something of some psychic importance to me and thee in the meantime, okay?
Shattered nerves, I've got to fight this stuff and come up with the goods oi vay. . .
You want blood with the borscht?

Hawkeye:
3 am and maudlin

At three in the morning a maudlin Hawkeye, washing away the gay party veneer with an almost tear. . .
trying not to force it out. . .
did you for once not economise the truth by telling of the tie towards Cavalier, his instinct lending credence to your sudden infirmity?
It was I who chose to follow up those stairs, post-party, to listen to the convulsing self- accusations that you appeared to be lacerating your fate with. . .
I had to choose, after reading so much Ovid recently. . .
hence I have some stirrings of the immutability of the triune fate. . .
So I slipped on good old Faure's 'Requiem' this evening to whip up the jaded

enthusiasm. . .

I want to surmount the difficulty of your nostalgia. . .
this stuff is not the fond nostalgia that you always urged me to experience and remember, but the sort of bitter pill the heart does not delay in unbending in my precious ear, the only instrument I have for tapping the dreamlife (audio section) the message of the Sybil. . .
Awaiting her reply, silent in the night and in the day sometimes, saying your name, only very softly. . .
You repeatedly said in your distinctly non-oracular voice, why did I follow her?
Since you (Hawkeye) treated me like a stubborn bitch (you said). . .
A mistake, since you were in fact responsible for certain enlightenments shone towards me. . .
You had consistently scoffed at my testimonies of them, until that maudlin moment after the party, after you had dispersed your young guests, bid them on their way with an insult or two, and had collapsed silent, a self-deflation that was essentially the normal state underneath all that acting, without hyperventilation of the mind. . .
All thoughts and actions of the last Pimms-filled five hours evaporated as if they had never existed, which to all intents and purposes they hadn't my dear. . .
One more turn around the wheel of self-pity. . .
Why do I love him, why do I care at all?
The Circle nudges forth and forward a notch, a little Leonardo knot tightens a fraction, suffocated labyrinth, at every mention of that certain taboo and four-letter word, love. . .
We once agreed only to mention it as a whim of the moment, when events had to conspired to overtake all other considerations. . .
never as a constant or some sort of weird promise or vow that obviously could not be fulfilled, ever. . .
A lesson well learnt since we had all, at one time or another, found in love the emotional blackmail of. . .
“I love you” really means “you must say it to me in return or I will be upset, change the love to resentment”. . .
“I love you” means “I own you even if I profess not to own you, I still own you a little bit and a little bit more”. . .
“I love you” actually means “you are mine mine mine” and so on and so forth. . .
Do I need to endlessly reiterate the snares and traps of life's mysterious conjunctions?
Far better the purity of path of the god Religion though curiously not devotion. . .
hardly surprising since your deity cannot answer questions directly if you know what I mean. . .
Then always the stonewall of faith, but faith in what?

Logic chases around in a bitter circle. . .
This time vicious , hardly the spirallic unfolding, but a gnarled, vexatious encroachment on t he spirit. . .
A few hours of groaning and roaring, crying and sniffing Hawkeye, and then you're as perky as ever, fit to face the world's snigger again. . .
We did the healing work together or was it your salesman's “positive mental attitude” (intoned in a mid-West American accent), your mid-Atlantic charm conveyed in expected calm above the area of convulsion. . .
The morning routine, slap the face on after rubbing the night away with lotion and cotton wool, tissue and cleanser. . .
And then the tart-with-heart's gruesome game of identity, the daytime bluff you know. . .
The slightly limper wrists, the crossing (arched) of the legs, the hand outspread across the face, hand balanced elegantly or as elegantly as you can muster, on the terrible hand. . .
Those hands that you despaired of so much. . .
they were not elegant hands it was true, though they were ruggedly honest at least. . .
And your chevalier, forgotten once more or was he?
Do you really think about him all the time?
If so, his must be an impossible target to close, punter to sell, to hunt, to stake out. . .
Swim with me once more Hawkeye, don't let this be the last time. . .
let me dream of you without pain as my realisation unfolds, as mother obsession is unravelled from my brow, as my self begins to bud and bloom openly for the first time, let me dream of your kindness only, your brave acceptance of the hermaphrodite dilemma, so close to my own. . .
Yet unique your path. . .
we have touched in fond nostalgia to keep association. . .
to catch the breath, to believe the spirit of requiem.

Cavalier:
of windows and wives

Sometimes, in this writer stuff, one just has to keep a promise, if one has been so initially foolhardy as to make one out. . .
And I did promise you all about the wedding. . .
what a strange set-up it was, worthy of a few paragraphs of stylised nostalgia and nit- picking, fictionally speaking. . .

However you must understand, and I principally mean you here Cavalier, yes Peter old chap, since you and I spent our first fully moving conversation discoursing on the subject of our former wives. . .
Naturally enough (the chorus of despairing gentlest readers protest), what can two old hacks, eloping with themselves on a year of rest and recuperation (teacher-training style) have in common but their ex-devotos?
But such strange parallels as yet still mystically entwined. . .
the fact that Jewish or Slavic premonitions and clairvoyancies held the stage of the conversation. . .
other facts surrounding the mental state of the participants, the shady dealings of both mothers-in-law, all verified months later when reading the 'Letters to Sylvie', but then at that (first) time just simple astonishment at the uniqueness, though still the synchronicity of the parallel experiences. . .
It forged the first link I believe, between our transmitting selves, dear Cavalier. . .
And I speak not in jest, a serious alternative to the chat of weather or methods of teaching adolescents the rudiments of study skills. . .
or sex, or occasionally politics/religion and of course gossip, or Gossip, these all being stock alternatives covering every persuasion of trainee lecturer. . .
but here was something different. . .
Between us we could amass several large areas of synchronous behaviour that would leave the average coincidence burying its head in the sand with disbelief. . .
So it's inevitably with the shadow of the stunning 'Letters' that my composition is sketched, briefly and within the context of my mirror shards. . .
Not forgetting that mine is one mirror, though horribly disfigured, it is still one image split into many splinters. . .
Cavalier, yours is a plethora of images scaled down to one burning obsession (or should I say burnt-out?
For you to decide I think, mon chevalier). . .
In the long run all these comparisons had to be set down in novel form, since the grain of truth suspended richly in the perhaps amber of their fictions was enough to interest the gods of so-called suicidal imaginations, whose very glory lies in the certainty of plain amalgamation within the spirit of those who perceive say, the sculpture already buried in the granite slab and ready to emerge fully-formed with the artist's transmission and skill. . .
Or the poem already buried in the blank sheet of paper. . .
The novel, whose limitations are simply those of fiction itself, either in the slow meanders of slinky realism. . .

bitter or sweet, gritty or fantastic, dirty or clean, or the cascading rapids of the stirred-up torpidity of the melancholic as s/he sits in front of that damned window at night, waiting for certainty to fire its greedy trumpet up into the tortured sky once more. . .
Healing hands, don't doubt my powers of resistance to your salvation, moment by moment by moment.

Sparrow:
poem of avalanche No 5

More dreams of Sparrow as she flies, rather flitters, away during the

crossover night of the meeting with Hawkeye, that first sleaze party wind-down, the appropriate adjustment of brain-cell capacity for sleaze the slowing of moral and political judgement and jumping to conclusions and so forth. . .
A cusp of gentle horror too, rising above me as the two omens together form a message across the psychic ,yet unheralded, sky. . .
The dance, that cell-block of the Ceilidh, when mostpeople had politely cavorted, the majority its pains to stretch anew along the corridors of pleasantry and slight drunkenness, underneath on the sportive earth creating no turbulence it seemed, unless my dancing and shattered heart divulge its secret, which in all these pages, of course it cannot. . .
The best that will emerge is your distinct version of queasiness as the mirror truths glance out at you from the white hot embers of these fragmented sentences going nowhere though nevertheless growing out, branching in a subterranean somewhere. . .
As they fill incessantly a too-slowly expanding consciousness, something no doubt will burst. . .
is it the exorcism for which I am beginning to long for and to take seriously, should it happen?
Or is it more than a private affair, something dating back from a transference of obsession from my mother, she who sat in Dr Cox's little office, and almost wept to think of no small sister for her baby boy, growing up so fantastically in her literal fantasy (as mentioned earlier in this tiny text of fire)?
Huh that sounds more private than private. . .
something never uttered in family circles, something that could not be said, something that until my Friend in her wisdom forcefully pointed out in no uncertain terms some nights ago, had not even been realised in a fully conscious manner. . .
Maybe because of the wood and the trees. . .
yes I'm too close to the vortex myself, the ridiculous position of the soul in relation to its own image. . .
or perhaps because I don't usually buy that transactional analysis stuff about everything relating back to the package given as a very small child from a non-understanding parent. . .
My Friend is consistently close in interpretation however, having an uncanny knack of fairly successfully avoiding the sister role, the ceaselessly moving self-image in my mirror, over nine years. . .
no mean feat, I can assure you. . .
Poor Sparrow, you fell into older sister role very early on, even with shades of auntie and mother thrown in for. . .
Good luck I was going to say, though when one thinks that through, the doubts come thick and fast and. . .
Well in any case, here comes this little storehouse of unreliabilities I call a

poem, written to you in dramatic switchover from manic to depressive, that fateful evening of the first meeting with Hawkeye, the dependence charged to change from one anima to another, the sweet transference of pain from high to ultra high until no conscious effect can be felt at all. . .
Letting go of the trauma now as the pen grips, shredding the paper it falls upon. . .
no good to glance at truth head on, it needs to be aslant in this particular game of hide- and-seek-and-trust. . .
Incidentally Sparrow, absolutely no blame as the Chinese used to say (I Ching and so on) for your adoption of my nephew/son/brother qualities. . .
since I was asking for it all.

'Then at the beginning an old frame rises up and acquits itself in anger', yes the framework shielding the truth from discovering itself sitting within its own shimmering clarity I'd say. . .
Not the only time I could mutter yes please, though no one hears the shout underneath it, the hidden agenda. . .
Underneath what?
Are you, am I, digging down a well with a bucket hanging limply on a string of false or deluded enquiries?
What is all this stuff about dreams if they cannot be irrational, like the best novels, nudge?
But the habit of dispatching irrationalities with a mere question mark attached to a statement is a dubious craft. . .
it smells of genuine madness, intolerance and above all obsession, the harping on about old scores unsettled, even worse. . .
The hemmed in paranoia, either of the agoraphobia of space Hawkeye, bustling busily your way out of the frantic corner of safety and solitude. . .
Or of the agoraphobia of the mind, the fluttering and engaging Sparrow, never a raptor swoop towards the tasty runaway rodent dish, but a slighter cover up just as instinctive, just as clever, another life-and-soul-of-the-party, though a very different party nonetheless, the awkward depression transmuted to vibrant pleasantries and a grace of sorts, the head shielded with defensive mechanics brought on by sheltering from this bitch of a world, media graphics etched prematurely on the cortex, flight from the extinguished battle of technique, the slightly averted look at all times, until trust safely and firmly established on mutual terms. . .
Every irrationality very individual, the apparent normality masquerading as eccentricity, the little mannerisms. . .
we all have them, Sparrow after just a couple of conversations, we're away and laughing about all the little foibles of body language. . .
the hand posed by the cheek in order to concentrate on the other person

and supposedly appreciate their comments. . .
The slightly bouncing leg crossed over the other one, perhaps a more general moving about the room, tidying up the already three times tidied. . .
Or the wandering of the eye, not necessarily out of boredom, but of placating the bird inside, awaiting a cryptic form of metamorphosis for some allegedly dirty deed a few years back. . .
awaiting retribution, of the body gradually being transformed by those thwarted motions into feathers, wings, pinions on which to glide away almost unnoticed. . .
the mannerisms slowly engulfing the rest of the personality. . .
as actually happens let's face it, until our psyche is all surface, all defence mechanisms thank you very much, not much left to chance or risk, I'd say. . .
Just as with Ovid's nymphs turning into trees (it's really always birds or trees I note caustically. . .
very low on trees in this text, although the first shard written promised both, but I'm somewhat averse, as you know ha, to promises fulfilled, although not averse to apologising for their non-appearance). . .
But those maidens, what was the last focus in their bodies of the human element still left intact?
The face, yes then in all probablility the mouth, the lips, trying so hard to their lover, friend of family, exacting what it is they have to tell, the crucially important piece of information they have not yet managed to convey through the three minutes, or three hours, or three years of their story/narrative/adventure. . .
As the slowly encroaching knot of strangulation grips the dreamer, more and more fully aware of their fate if they don't get to say that word or remember it afterwards at least in their drowsy awakening. . .
Maybe the fate of those metamorphosed is just the reverse to our condition on waking up, their word locked forever on their lips and their minds. . .
while we, either the vengeful god who has ordered the change, or the unwilling lover, relative and so forth, gaze stupidly with our mouth collectively slopping open, the drool running down our untimely chin.

Yes, 'no one hears the shout below it', what I said six months ago seems to have become almost preternaturally true, in that it has surfaced, like the ship resurfacing after a long soaking in the primeval soup of the unconscious, in a significant dream, hallucinogenic travelling, self-hypnosis etc etc. . .
No one hears the shout below it because we're freezing into stone, into petrified trees, into the freezing sight of our own talons gripping fast on the branch we were merely admiring from afar. . .
'As the level rises to running fast throw a crowded set of faces echoing no

value, no value in your idea', the trigger-happy word counters or even worse, the meaning counters of our literary establishment, swinging the club of linguistic fertility, willing to drum you and I out of their existence by extolling the virtues of their own fatuous brand of realism, from whatever fashionable school of creative interpretation. . .
the isometrics of deconstruction trundle on, they can't hear us anyway, remember?
We're birds and trees and stone, struggling out of life and limbo, stretching our wings and branches, striving to make free the air with our cries, though nothing comes out of our mouths. . .
we're dumb in every conceivable way, what is the point of going on?
A brick on the head, solid matter encased in the unmentionable, dream on Sparrow. . .
In my dream you awoke me to the possibilities of avalanche, of amoral soaring on talons and also soft feet. . .
Those crowded set of faces, the onlookers, the charming crowd of legitimate rumour- mongers perhaps, but we won't go into that just now. . .
No value in the idea?
'But not me' it says here, “I can't touch myself, never, that would be the every way out', well there's several tracts on meeting the beat, I would imagine. . .
'It cannot be, but is', yes I remember writing that, 'the vortex suffers and it engulfs, not rising out of the whirl of black and white, that memory encases the passion of doubt, that narrow passage of outlet', full stop. . .
No more phone calls yet, five days on, you await my letter. . .
I'm waiting for the big dream, the one that says, if your desire is great enough, you too can fly. . .
Desire meeting the plain incredulous, you who would be the most likely of the sisters to read this mirror, you with your professional psychologist's squint at the power of derangement, what do you make of all this?
Is the connection between focus and friendship this intertwined?

Then at the beginning an old
frame rises up and acquits
itself in anger. Not the only
time I could mutter yes please,
but no one hears the shout
below it, as the level increases
to running fast through a
crowded set of faces echoing
no value, no value in your idea.
But not me, I can't touch myself,
never, that would be the every
way out. It cannot be, but is.
The vortex suffers and it engulfs,
not rising out of the whirl of

black and white, that memory
encases the passion of doubt,
the narrow passage of outlet.

Gentle reader:
the funeral

Well, from time to time a little sunshine glows through the gloom. . .
I have to admit gentle reader, that so far you've had to put up with an extraordinary amount of angst and anguish. . .
Having to come to the typewriter every evening, pouring my scorn on to this paper, almost begging forgiveness from myself in order to start the process, sometimes with block, sometimes with the gush of genuine energy. . .
And when describing events in the remote past or a dream sequence say, or so-called recent real events, the jumble of unconscious elements. . .
Talking to the Snail on the phone this evening, he remarked on the same thing, feeling that everything that's happened in the past year was all completely remote and unrelatable. . .
So much that happens in a single day, so many little epiphanies, hopes, crises, slaughters, judgments, victories, humility, pride and all the rest of it that life with a big L feeds me with, that even if I sat here for three hours, in the intensity with which I would wish to be bound into, I could still not express all that has happened, not even a quarter adequately. . .
The snag being that life arrives pell-mell, without any orderly considerations, summaries or handy precis. . .
it hits the fans so to speak, even though we put our little orders, time-scales, irrelevant stopwatches on the time of things, on their space. . .
No matter it still hits us full on, without regret or remorse, not apologising for itself in the least, while we attempt either to impose greater order, compromise our insight on to all of it. . .
or we just give up a little, probably more and more each day. . .
This latter (conventionally) is supposed to occur in the last days of life, sitting on the metaphoric front porch, total nostalgia mode as it were. . .
though what about when one is thirty-six and in the middle (we assume) of it all?
The rat-race contends that we can't let go. . .
the counter-culture asserts that we can and in fact do, yet we are obliged to make a
living. . .
you've heard all the arguments back and forth, you know the score, you're not stupid. . .
So it's a matter of choosing, being eclectic, just plain choosy about what is

to be put in and what is to be left out, you see I'm showing you the framework, just how it works for the novice at this game. . .
perhaps you might even be inspired, if that's the right word. . .
Therapy, the Friend calls it. . .
pride must take a back seat here, because this is a quest, a search for that sister, multiple- imaged and I guess also a search for myself amongst all this, and it's happening right now, I'm not just some magisterial author-ity figure laying it out in a disguised version in a bloody romantic novelette, when doctor Tony and nurse Sister find out what it's really like to love and live. . .
oh no this stuff is from the viscera mates, some sanity is on the line here. . .
Neither a middle-class twerpiness living the lie and pretending it's all vitally important, for the sake of credibility, because that which we believe happens to us all the time, it unfolds as we breathe each breath (the true latinate meaning of inspiration if you will, along with inhalation, another word for the same thing, the same system of being that gets us through moment to moment, the bottom line of existence below which we dare not pass).

Perhaps this pensiveness was set off by something that did happen today as a matter of fact, a funeral I turned up at, not a close relative. . .
In one sense, just a whipping back to eleven year old days, the boy convert with his mates in the local church. . .
the same prayers read in the same sing-song incantation that I grew to abhor them, before the teenage Buddhist phase ha, they still cause a wince in the heart (the prayers). . .
Jesus must have been one of the good guys but. . .
A steady sobering takes place, a little halt on all the vanities, all the mental escapades we f ling ourselves into with that gay abandon that seems superficial at a later date. . .
The bottom line of existence which this person had passed beyond, despite the faith and hope of the comfort of ritualised religion. . .
But who am I anyway?
Just a hack who's hacking away night after night trying to make some unconscious sense out of the whole game. . .
a need, a shove into sanity. . .
sister, can you supply the metaphor?
No perhaps not, it looks like it's going to be realise it for yourself. . .
the via negativa is a long lone ride, with a few cheerful crossroads along the way, extra interest only at those times. . .
Hawkeye, are you listening?
A dream of you is on the horizon. . .
the quietness of day breaks into the confused horror of dream. . .
wiping the brow with a gift, of what?

Hawkeye:
poem for St Jude No 4

In this dream Hawkeye, there is Malian music playing. . .
you probably haven't listened to the music of the kora, immersed as you are in Mozart and the Clash, Edith Piaf, Eartha Kitt and Billie Holliday, but it's a special instrument, stringed but not like any other guitar-type sound. . .
Anyway the sound in dreams is not always compl(e)(i)mentary to what we think should be lurking there. . .
But it's an important dream for me, realised in the poetic, taken down with as much decorum as was possible at the time, the amanuensis of profound measurement, taken in step with sincere feeling, after the first headlong rush, infatuation, the excitement of a kindred spirit. . .
And also the long, slow and often painful realisation that the spirit is sometimes a mirror-image too, by definition almost, showing many facets of the unconscious and also conscious personality. . .
Still we learn, or we do not learn, to stop flinching, and look calmly. . .
But the problem was, Hawkeye, that I never knew what was around the corner, sometimes literally. . .
in our walks in Town, under the bright lights, what would happen?
The long-legged stride of your impatience, but slowly slowly, until something caught the interest. . .
always the put-down, the edge of a sardonic comment and then waiting tense for that great horsey laugh. . .
The only times I knew what to expect were when you were lost, in reverie, in anguish, in shock, in intensity. . .
and I had to (had to?) assume the fraternal (you said “paternal” though) role once more. . .
Three or four days of breakfasts made, pillows plumped, the whole paraphernalia of holding the hand, pretending to be doctor, shaman, mock priest oh you name it, just to cool down the atmosphere. . .
You were wild, manic, angry, hungry, though did not mean to be. . .
did we connect at those times?
Or were you merely slowing down enough so that I could catch up on the

frantic mental activity that you sweated out continuously?
In the murky light of self-delusion, the insane parallels cast out of the legacy of agoraphobia, the huntress momentarily sick and tired of what you called the grungers, those ninety-nine per cent of mostpeople that didn't understand. . .
I was one of that set some of the time too. . .
the ground rules shifted so suddenly, one day in one day out, though sometimes so vulnerable, so fed up with the pretense and acting, you were longing for the hubby that would give you the little boy you occasionally showed the aching for, a little brood on top of the pile of midnight starings into the half-moon, just on the rise. . .
What was it you saw in the moon's austere faces?
Did you see yourself there, did you see me at all?
Or any of the other shamans accumulated there?
How about the moon as a mirror?
Some would say not at all unlikely, a primal event not to be scorned. . .
an accusation by the finger chimed in unison with the bogeyman, all together now, wait for it to spread a stain of welcome out of itself.

'The speed of your look is swift to the actual core', yes yes Bill Blake, sing on we're listening, or rather I'm listening. . .
Hawkeye you're not terribly convinced of the bard's pre-eminent insight here. . .
'The hair, now, a haloed surround to the wonderful surprise', and it was wonderful, I can sing it to the full, that look treasured in nostalgia, the fond relief of the end of a gruelling empathy, the only light of furious friendship, although friendship not a word you would use to describe what was happening, but I am convinced. . .
And rather than all the saints in your plastered antechamber called heaven, I would sooner see one smile from your wide lips and the little lines around the edges indicative of the coming smile, the liquid furrow in your brow moulding an existence necessary to itself, happy to be apart from others when it really matters, unafraid of the bogey dark, lightening it up if needed. . .
'Once distraught, now your delight matchmakes beauty', yes a torn beauty perhaps, though one that can be transformed by the whim of a smile to a recovered sense, a taking off in flight once again under the mapped sky of your migration route through this place that I call home, wherever I am. . .
'A prize among the derelict series of life's chance tangent, a breath direct', the solid look into the other's eyes, a few seconds saving a lifetime's longings. . .
yet this only expands the horizon, the madness of love that consumes totally, yet still offers more and more to reach out for, the sometimes rabid

insanity for the other, leading to nothing but tears, a cruel dodge. . .
Then saying I love you, we've been through this a dozen times, is it a constant and so on and so forth?
No no we agreed, just for now the love is there, just sit back and relax in it, don't spoil it, for tomorrow we'll be swearing at each other, off-stage (obscene's original meaning, historically, theatre-wise). . .
Right now, at this time, in this place, here. . .
give it up, let it go, sink into it, into me into you. . .
'A breath direct, the glow of steam on my glass vision', just before the clearing begins 'away from the chaos', but not into rigid order. . .
we've heard about that, just an uptight digression, the stay-at-home who never ventures out, the agoraphobic monster that glistens quietly in the unlit room. . .
Yeah yeah, and the alternative to chaos?
'The normal drives chasing the aroma of a throaty laugh. . .
It's you really'. . .
My fourth dream on high for you, Hawkeye.

The speed of your look
is swift to the actual core,
the hair (now) a haloed surrounding
to a wonderful surprise,
once distraught, now
your delight matchmakes beauty.
A prize among the derelict
series of life's chance tangent,
a breath direct, the glow of
steam on my glassy vision, away
from the chaos, the normal drives
chasing the aroma of a
throaty laugh. It's you, really.

Cavalier:
minotaurs and sentinels

Every night I look at this damned list of notes I have in a little notebook I keep behind the stereo, and I think, is this it?
The tiny scribblings from half-forgotten dreams, readings from Ovid, comments at odd intervals from the Friend. . .
Let me give you a glance, if you were writing this stuff, what would you do with. . .
Mirrorgames, Narcissus Ovid and Echo, Eve in Milton, Hawkeye maudlin, Byblis/Caunus, minotaur is me, taking over Mum's obsession, what?
But you're going to have to wade through the extended versions of these targets, this material and more (in very extended detail, perhaps) in the next N number of
words. . .
Look give yourself a break right now, and give it up, I won't mind. . .
since I'm just soldiering on anyway, out of some kind of misguided momentum, don't give it a thought. . .
because I have to write the stuff, it's a straw just floating there for this demented person drowning in obsessions to grasp at, am I right?
So what's the point, just talk amongst yourselves and I'll tip-tip away on the old Imperial 66. . .
and more to the point, I'll see if I get there before you and if I do dear reader, I'll wait for you honest. . .
Well then again I might not, you bastards (when in doubt insult the reader, you taught me, Cavalier). . .
It's rather like looking at the sun. . .
it's already moved on by eight minutes' worth since one has already looked at it, if you get my drift, since the light takes that long to reach someone on earth. . .
well this sunshine ha, is going to take a lot longer than that to reach you, no doubt.

The minotaur, that's a tricky one. . .
I've got lots of juicy quotes from Foucault about how the monster is our ego which we're very disappointed to find at the centre of our being. . .
this is the true existential problem and so forth, although he doesn't use the E word I hasten to add. . .
And simply masses of material on labyrinths and mandalas in relation to the ancient Greeks, Bill Blake's 'Jerusalem' and the more unconscious obsessions of Dr Carl, but I can't tell you (because a chum currently holds the notes [2nd draft], has probably lost them [3rd draft]). . .
And anyway strictly speaking, it's irrelevant to the long-running metaphor here (and you know how I love to stick to the point, right?)
So the text is like a labyrinth, especially in the process of writing it or setting out (in the horticultural analogy). . .
When (if) I get my notes back, I'll elaborate some more on what happened back there in the old days when I, through literary criticism, might have saved the soul of the chthonic future blah blah, or at least made sure I didn't end up completely Deolali (doo-lally) before age fifty-five. . .
Is it a deal?
Suffice to say at this point that working inwards from the outside of this particular walled garden is an item of trust. . .
I don't even possess a simulacrum of the equivalent of the thread that Ariadne produced for Theseus, or the one that Bill Blake mentions ('Jerusalem' chapter three), the golden string that allows him to wander in and out of the dark forest and back to his sanity and his writing. . .
Also in at heaven's gate he says, for him either Jerusalem or Babylon is sitting there, depending on the state of the contraries, must be the first psychological novelist
ha. . .
But am I, by writing this tissue of false corrections, knee-bends in the dark, apostrophes to angst's triumph and french kisses to the spirit, actually committing myself to meeting the monster in the middle?
Remember your Ovid and anyone else of those ancients who elaborated the myth. . .
he was the product of a bestial coupling (as they say), the wife of King Minos (yes I used to mix him up with Midas) between her masquerade as a cow with a wooden frame (uh?) and a lusty bull who mistook said frame for the form of a beloved. . .
Anyway young Minotaur was the shame and, as can be imagined, the ultimate embarrassment of Minos's lot and carefully concealed in the mazed crime, by importing the world's first and foremost pseudo-scientific mind, Daedalus, and commissioning him to build the labyrinth. . .
Cue Icarus myth and that's definitely a whole another story, not to be

mentioned again tonight. . .
that's the Seabird section, which I know I've neglected yes yes, I'll visit you again in my dreams I'm sure. . .
But the cross-crafted monster is a part of all this, well perhaps he's the shadow we've all heard Dr Carl talk about, the monstrous guilt-producing, shameful instigator, that some of us call the devil to externalise it, or at least the opposer to conscience. . .
tsk tsk the one we have to lock away for fear of inheriting the characteristics through contact, yeah the scapegoat I think we could represent it as that. . .
It's supposed to have nothing to do with generation contact, but well, it's riddled with inheritance syndrome, after all in this case the king's son no less, locked away from any public disclosure. . .
It's the pit of the murky mind, the bottom-most whirl of the black-and-white vortex, where the last few rings of black begin to merge, indissoluble. . .
The ghoul-parlour where all the nasty bogeymen hang out to pass their nervy, snitchy, runny-nosed time. . .
wailing in the pitch-darkness, unsatisfied and hungry to sidle and pounce quietly. . .
Since deepest reaction to birth trauma we've kept these ghost patterns waiting, the gripping passport to a fate much worse than eternal hell. . .
now they've collected in force into one powerful-enough being who waits with infinite patience, or does (s)he?
Traditionally, in Ovid and others, he has to be sacrificed towards, every three years. . .
that's what all the Theseus'n'Ariadne business is about. . .
Theseus the tasty tidbit waiting to be salivated with relish, but he kills the crazy big guy instead, before that nasty hairy monster gets to him first. . .
And must I kill also, my own minotaur?
The St George type figure of my own soul ho, killing that naughty dragon-eel, who has carried off all my sisters in his gape-gape, blood-soaked jaws. . .
all those women that I'm supposed to have had the chivalries for. . .
The saintly and platonic contact, that subtle mixture of heroic deeds, the grand juxtaposition of Plato and the Christian outposts of sanity in the so-called Dark Ages, the true Renaissance politeness ahem, of the courtier to the queen, enabling the knight to throw away his life and purpose in battle for the lady's political acumen. . .
jousting, warfare, the Falklands, ah no wait a minute, absolutely no politics here, how did that slip in?
And it's got a lot to do with Moby Dick and that monomaniac Ahab, but that's another essay. . .
it's about hieroglyphs and circles that one. . .
is there no rest for the wicked characters in fiction?

But if you want to read a really sublime study in obsession, don't read that whippersnapper Edgar Allan, stick instead with uncle Herman. . .
not only is his main dramatic protagonist an obsessed madman, but the writer takes on the persona of an increasingly screwball dilettante primadonna. . .
calculating, careful, fastidious fragmentalist and piss-artist, who has all the leads on dealing the cards in exactly the right order to do away with not only the whole crew except little Ishmael, but also the sense of any living out of writing that Melville might have had a chance to enjoy. . .
That is however we have received a true statement from a person's soul experience of this world and beyond, and those are rare indeed. . .
The minotaur analogy is spread so evenly over all the main characters including old white- chops himself, that following this particular myth throughout the book must be a good choice for the basket-case potential. . .
But what if following the minotaur in a psychic life just leads to a total confrontation, in other words an empty mirror with you standing there, with just the cusp of a future understanding lurking in your two-year-old psychic vocabulary?
The complete inverse of the smashed mirror with someone else's reflection there, however distorted, one would have thought. . .
Though is it more comforting to have any kind of image, as long as there is something, not simply a nothing suspended in the air, letting through all the light, letting in all the air, your own ghost tapping you on the preternatural shoulder just a little too early?
We all worry about self-image. . .
nothing is as scary as finding a space in the mirror, that empty obliteration where we convinced ourselves through half a lifetime's interminable logic that are ego existed of course. . .
We give it some pretty pretty word, but ego is what it boils down to. . .
And apart from that, to set down for a possible readership, doesn't that give the so-called author some responsibility over her/his readers/clients etc?
Perhaps so, though where does one draw the line between an obsessional text written for oneself and the other also?
They melt, merge and form a symbiosis which can be both strengthening and healthy, degrading and insufferable. . .
Okay, Cavalier, for you know that this effort here on paper, this splinter plucked from the irritable wound caused after the breakage of silence is a letter rapped out to you in snuggest Chigwell, how are you old chap?
After the time for action, you're a braver man than most, wading through these (by now) soggy crumbs. . .
do you have anything to say, or is it a stoical midnight transmission?
You who stayed in your cell-block room at Roehampton, except to knock them on the head with genius seminars or to lounge in sentinel mode in

the foyer collecting compliments and assurances from the Twenty legions of fans for your advice, admirers and so on. . .
You're the dedicatee, though I hope not the minotaur in this very scary Circle twitching around, ever onward. . .
The sentinels await, never calculating, slovenly yet pacifically alert, waiting as always for the signal to wait still further upon your whim.

Seabird:
poem on Pal's wisp of wind

A dream about seagulls flying in ordered streams across the sky, on the way to where?
A jet crashes its noise over the surf, the destiny to travel no further in its lifetime than the smallest mayfly buzzing in the heat of a June day inland. . .
the lake scouring a countryside full of feverish promise and unkind attentions. . .
The water not being deep, it's a drought amongst my astral flight, parched throat in the wind and feathers loose of oil, gliding but constrained in the warm breath of aircurrent bending upwards and then down to face the. . .
To alight once more on a favourite place, the edge of a cliff-face, on top of the knoll, the corner of a flat-roofed cafe, singing and sighing in the forecast wind springing up, refreshing from the noon heat. . .
pleasure of flight, alone until tomorrow, obstructing no-one, rescued from indomitable sorrow. . .
You are far away in my dream, your beak dipped low on the horizon. . .
constantly thinking of you, lost Seabird. . .
In my reveries a casual friend who becomes the sister bird, as might have happened. . .

but through the agency of events, strangulation of plans, desires, fruition. . .
Instead an empty mirror looking back at me with accusation, what has defended the right to silence over these years?
Resting on the rock, some defilement has made loose my spirit, shaking in its unaccustomed aloneness. . .
the coast without a tree, wind-blown yet curiously silent, only the wind sensed for company, and that of my only tongue, clicking towards the sunlight in seclusion. . .
Once a tongue to speak, now only a suppressed howl breaks forward and back across the bay that is my fluid home these dream years. . .
Again diving for food, sweeping for water as a vertical mass waving gently upwards, a circle formed under the setting sun. . .
having never flown too close to the sun, my winds and wings well-oiled. . .
It's you that I'm looking for. . .
and I've seen the difference, your swoop, the harmony of paths crossed and wrenched apart. . .
the force of a shotgun hurtling you from the sky upwards to the heaven of awkward landing flop. . .
I wake, the different position from falling asleep, the moment of tipping over vulnerable in the throes of snooze, confusion of place and time in the afternoon, am I still human?
Feeling the legs in place, alone in the house, your spirit calls, its shriek, not lonely but
alone. . .
Staring out the window. . .
the suburban noises of strimmer, lawn mower, various drills on home making ventures applied, the little squeals of the well-placed lives. . .
knowing the exact amount of money, loans, acceptances, the children's fates happily and painstakingly mapped out in fastidious detail. . .
am I an outcast in this well-ordered scheme of things?
So much confidence, in what?
In life, in order itself?
The job to achieve, obtain and maintain. . .
I'm wandering here and there, still half in dream half in space, I sip the coffee by the window-sill. . .
the hedgerows and the holiday cyclists wheeling by in their subordinated flight-on- wheels. . .
waking up, up to the tunes of sorrow in nostalgia, waiting till those clouds float by to reveal. . .
more of the same.

The therapy of writing, some say, is it though?
I'd sooner be depressed than pretend to escape (avoiding hypocrisy) but

the Friend does not understand as yet. . .
it's all a serious game of transaction to her, well and to most of the others, it seems. . .
A world which I am not a part of, where people work things out, achieve the objective, are finished with it forever, and then have to return because they have a spirit left of some sort. . .
they breathe and exist and so are still a part of consciousness stream, whether they like it or not. . .
Subsumed and transmuted into pride/ambition, realisable material goals, while the unconscious keeps on throwing up the elements of surprise and desire, until character and ego-boosting crushes out the last flame of conscious appreciation of such a process, until we're clean and white. . .
no trace of any badness underneath. . .
we must be careful not to tread in anything that smells, we're squeaky clean and proud of it. . .
No flies on us, till we've passed away, and then we're concealed in a little wooden box, with satin inside, and lowered into the ground so gently, so irretrievably (who is going to want to dig us up and remember us face to face?)
Even better to be cremated, so we don't have the relatives suffer the indignation of physical nostalgia at the graveside. . .
All this while I stand, morbid, by the window when (epiphany) it becomes a mirror and I'm back in the swim of the dream life, escaping the mordant desires of reality to be unobstructed in the grace of your flight pattern, somehow everything that we ever missed is compensated for. . .
thus I exist by your shoulder always, is this romance ha?
How many others have felt this for you, from their secret wound?
I a relatively insignificant one amongst many who have this dream relationship with your sister-figure?
You'd think it demented I'm sure, yet I'll never know unless. . .
The days of infatuation rebound and rebound through other friendships, loves and hates. . .
the old pattern emerging and still re-emerging with unseemly haste, through all the cultures, every single glance of affinity from one age and the next. . .
Maybe that's why some people really believe they are reincarnated, it's all the same. . .
A strange reason why, as one gets older Seabird, everybody younger than oneself, begins to look the same. . .
Must be specially acute in this postmodern age, as fashion begins to be fragmented and re- aligned in so many areas. . .
allegiances, trends and free market economy pressures, so that although everyone looks different, the superficial variety simply impresses itself on the brain or perception of the observer as a slightly similar variation, not

even noticeable really. . .
The crowd surges to and fro, in a swaying rhythm, all identical except for one or two individual blotches of the face. . .
moles, spots and bermuda shorts. . .
I am of the age when I begin to use the words 'everybody' and 'mostpeople' since there does not seem any point in distinguishing between individual talents and graces. . .
it seems there are very few, probably this means that to mostpeople I appear an eccentric, perhaps sooner that than the imbecility of compromised normality. . .
Your hair flies a wisp on my shoulder. . .
like the poem of several years ago begins.

'One wisp of wind plays almost passing my friend's wonder, something written, in rough draft form as a perspective from the view of friend Pal, but try as I might I couldn't bend the meaning and sentiments into that perspective. . .
in retrospect this utterance was for you, I can admit that now sisters. . .
Whereas most writers in the lyric can only blurt out that they could only write for the one ear, really they are creating a nebulous entity for all readers to relate to. . .
With me I guess it's the opposite, the vague 'you' becoming so much more acute, yet hidden, in my perception of how it must mean to you and me and the outsider. . .
'First the kiss (birth and death) then ripples laughing up on shoulders', yes the delicious warmth of the hand-covered mouth, afraid to laugh. . .
and yet it would come out, almost silent, almost a sigh until the face could contain it no longer, the smile of the epiphany. . .
The smile laid out forever or so it seemed, among the treasures of embrace, and yet signifying a select detachment, a respect due to your individual spirit and companionship. . .
'Frame and fingers outstretching, reached only to fragrance blushed, all-colours the tip of rain's lonely oneness, Seabird's wheeling call, beyond a rainbow settling on a far shore across the horizon's deep pull. . .
An orchestra of self-assurance, then doubt, the differences mingling in the harmony of the wave crash that I never understand, could not have understood even now, even less now. . .
'And lifted around his body smiling, the falling away has showered rich and exuberant', the 'his' changed to 'hers' or even 'its' I suppose, the consideration of gender twisted to a frame out of all recognition, as more and more the mirror shatters. . .
Perhaps it wasn't an awful moment of pre-cognition, of clairvoyance in the smashing in of life, but a gradual and piecemeal disintegration, flattering the laws of cause and effect themselves, until the understood reality

caves in and the speed of adjustment becomes more and more frantically outside itself. . .
An implosion of one's own peculiar possibilities insisting on being heard for the first and probably only time, around your image as it swelters and starts to crack under the heatstroke of extreme depression and nostalgia, doubled up on the couch of psychic assassination. . .
The laser stare of obsession, clinical obsession, into the mirror, beginning to get a grip on those laws of so-called reality. . .
the moment when all the balance of the real life and of dream just start to become a little inter-related. . .
It could have been the trauma of living from birth, somersaulting the senses into one another. . .
Till then there had been a sharpish line drawn naturally between the dream and its compensation. . .
now I wasn't so sure, in fact I wasn't sure of anything any more, but somehow the desire focused on you became more intense, as if a derangement of the senses could open up the field of sensibilities towards you and be more in tune with the outcome of fragmentation. . .
The mirror seems to melt but at the last minute, of what?
The glass sweats and begins to bend and attract itself on two opposing corners. . .
it flexes and starts to spin, all the beginnings are happening here as you'll note, even the central study of my story-letter to you, but instead of flexibility, these warps fracture. . .
So slowly, that I now have time to recall as if in slowmotion, I didn't notice at the time. . .
This is all completely repressed elemental psychic material you must understand. . .
so slowly the first crack appears and I contain not only my own image but the other's. . .
Like the first division of the cells in an ovum. . .
that first critical separation of the soul's unified dignity in oneness, and it happens again in life through birth, whenever it was. . .
I can't remember the year or date, or consciousness approaching normality ha, but it cracked slowly, infinitesimally, along the seam of a rich dream when the mirror of spirit became fluid just for that one instant and then everything from there started to solidify through fragmentation until it seems impossible to remember that moment as separate. . .
Only through the kind of pressured recall of the most relaxed dreamtime, among the deepest held secrets in non-REMsleep. . .
Yes 'the falling away has showered rich and exuberant' yes. . .
That's the falling away of the image captured just immaculately in words, the teeming infinities of possible persuasion now that the one crack had

appeared, a paradigm of all future effort to understand rather than to accept, to realise rather than simply
be. . .
The dreams of flying began then I'm sure. . .
a measured flight across a heaven-sent path in companionship. . .
All you are is contained in that path, waiting by the side of my double dreamer to be transmuted into any sort of companionship that you desire, a friend to pick up the fallen child that is me. . .
no not a parent, this is no repression of the mother image in anima, of that I'm finally sure, the DR Carl shadow leaping into sullen awareness after the rejection of the parents. . .
who am I anyway?
'Vibration of fresh time will seek to outfill his life', this time to keep 'his' rather than 'her' because this instant is the first after the crack. . .
the image has been changed from me into the fragments of you. . .
did you exist as one entity in that middle instant?
I don't know, but if I did know, would that really make a difference?
I'd have to grow up a lot to understand the maturity and immensity of that situation I think, and I'm a child in some ways still, especially if this is therapy. . .
His changes to hers and vice versa until that moment of fluid balance, then the roles are re- assumed and reversed again. . .
'Love and sweet love has placed my friend', that's my own reflection bent back again 'in more-than-himself, of magic and transmuted journeys, of the dance'. . .
that's the last and final realisation from that spiral, everything else blends in with what came before and what comes after, only the unfolding keeps pace with the velocity of light issuing forth from that silver mirror. . .
My more-than-himself becomes entwined with you, never being able to part. . .
Does that mean that all I have to do is accept your eternal presence, in order to avoid my loneliness feeling and also realise the peace with which I perhaps kid myself that this book, or this therapy, is all about?
The next lines in the journal of poems, although not part of this piece, explain it all from the unconscious. . .
'Under wheels containing upheld shots mercy gliding and eclipse in total', and then the crunch look in the gradually fragmenting shards to reveal 'acute the darkness parallel, parallel with me, obtuse the lighted path particular to you', your light in my darkness and so forth. . .
'Above chiming organ-ic clocks are a-peeling and rouge-red the sunset has a circle sun', a bit batty but definitely relevant. . .
Now I am suddenly aware of what these poems are on about, six years on, the wonder of composition!

Working its way through time to arrive, at the writer's own understanding, in this corolla, much much later, but still soon enough to absorb completely. . .
The wonder of therapy (ironic exclamation mark this time), the use of which, as you see, is sparing. . .
The next piece falling into place of its own accord. . .
as I listen to the starry silence fall as well, the glow of their paralysis through the inner ear, trembling.

Keep on gazing at me out of that mirror please, Seabird. . .
your cause and effect is not forgotten, more incidents from so-called real life may be recollected later. . .
how do I catalogue the discrepancies in dream and real life ahead, or do I need bother anyway?
Does it bother you gentle reader?
I should hope not, you're already confused enough before you start reading this ever- increasing morbidity. . .
And can you see how all this romantic conjuring of nostalgia and skeletons, up from depths and cupboards, wombs and monasteries, is doing me the power of good?
I hope it's doing you the power of good as well. . .
Ah I listened to Iris Murdoch on the radio yesterday (first draft) who had the honesty to admit that it was her obsession with writing which led her to write on
continuously. . .
not the fatuous hope (my words here) that anybody could learn anything or come to any great ideal or noble conclusions about their own lives of life in general. . .
Yes yes Iris, I'm beginning to see, as I sort out this medium underneath the reader's gentle eyes, that you have a point. . .
What about this wedding, you're thinking?
Well I'll be honest, I can't face it yet. . .
who can face memories of one's weddings, especially if there are more than one, without either flinching or grinning in the face of polite society?
I'm off to dreamtime once more to gather fruits of that paradisal land for your inspection, if only to tell you at the end of the day, dream some yourself and work it out for yourself too. . .
For the time that you read this book dear reader, you are a companion. . .
though when you put it down, as you must do for good or bad one day, as many of you will anyway out of disgust and frustration and/or impatience (typewriter says igno(t)rance) you're on your own once more. . .
You have been part of the general 'you', the sisters. . .
you've merged in with the style, the image and the tone, the elegance and

also the sheer pomposity. . .
the allegiance has worn a bit thin, if you've been a fledgling, now it's time to venture forth out of the nest for yourself. . .
The object of this text to lever you out of the comfy dozing armchair of reading into the comparative roller-coaster of hitting the paper with the pen, or at least thinking, the plot, the storyline, the setting, personal feelings including those behind the screen of I'd rather not see that, in fact especially those. . .
Start searching for the early worms of good taste and obsessional emotion yourself and don't spare the horses and so on. . .
Leave me here still swamping away on the old Imperial 66, I'll certainly be here if you ever decide to return, which you might want to do someday. . .
In the bad old days of novel writing, the book was the child that was sent on its way bewildered into the world. . .
now all those boundaries are blurred and it's taken for granted that the particular motive of the conspicuously dead author does not exist, we're slowly but ever-so gradually moving over to the idea at least that the reader may either be a pugilist of some note ready to bark back at the writer intelligently. . .
Or in fact, they themselves are children who have been let go, at any arbitrary time, to fend for themselves without the mercy of their creators ha. . .
Behind the glass of distortion or saturation, look through the mirror of your past and recognise the present dilemma contained in the up and down of breath. . .
it's your only friend.

One wisp of wind play almost
passing my friend's wonder,
first the kiss (birth and death) then
ripples laughing up on shoulders,
frame and fingers outstretching,
reached only to fragrance blush,
all-colours the tip of rain's lonely
oneness; and lifted around
his body smiling, the falling away
has showered rich and exuberant;
vibration of fresh time will seek to
outfill his life.
Love and sweet
love has placed my friend in
more-than-himself, of magic
and transmuted journeys. Of the dance.

Under wheels containing upheld
shots mercy gliding and
eclipse in
total;

acute the darkness parallel
parallel with me.
Obtuse the lighted path
particular to you.
Above chiming organ-ic clocks are
a-peeling and rouge red the sunset
has a circle
sun.

Puffin:

poem of a rambling promise

A letter from the homeland instead of exile. . .
This barking feeling I have connected with old bones talking, marches me to the sound of my own brittle fears launching into the epistolary mode. . .
my practice being these days, to write a little missive to a pal across the waves in order to tell them about what's going on here in 'Mirrorgames' land. . .
A light relief from the toil of novel writing in the second person narrative haha. . .
Is this a novel?
Another chapter or splinter perhaps, but I promise to give it some thought and save the remnants for the delectation of the gentle reader. . .
adding to the pile of abuse I direct amongst you and against myself, a pip on the navel of Babel, a delicious entwining of the widening gulf between each syllable and the next as time slows down to an eventual halt or holocaust. . .
For myself of course, I would like to know as much as you, I suspect. . .
as the dove of return stoops to let go the olive branch, I smell the land running through my hooped and ample Roman nose. . .
The direction of a word to our mutual forgotten memory of events past, which this crumb of text, representing the dross of nostalgia, has seriously dredged from the waterbucket thrown down into the trough of unconscious. . .
marbled headband of guilt throbbing with excited emotion as though remembering will pardon the swift events in marching, in song, in the entitlement of gorgeous colouring that besets the mind left numb for contemplation. . .
Still, in this gentle afternoon sun in Gurnard, it's more simple to be just grateful I
suppose. . .
At night, when the usual typewriter scribbling takes place, a more sinister left-handed night-time descends on these rattling flesh and bones and instils a mordant desire to jolt, to displease. . .
a mere imp of the perverse in old Edgar Allan's immor(t)al phrase. . .
Here in the noontide hour, a settled sun across the face of the lane outside the living room window. . .
It's a bay-type, a square one, with a table lodged in the middle of the spread, it's a dining table surrounded by chairs on three sides. . .
I gaze up from the typewriter and view the lane sloping down to my left, a hedge running along all my vision. . .
on the other side of the lane, beyond is the school field, previously I had heard the sunny shouts of six and seven year olds in the afternoons, collecting specimens and playing games. . .

carefree spirits spending their childhood without the regret of nostalgia. . .
I would often listen for Bunner's particular piping above all the other cries, but didn't catch it. . .
though I'm sure that if she were in some danger however, it would be as clear as a cracked bell among the chimes of many still ones. . .
The occasional car now, especially in the busy summer season, with yachting festivities in full swing, the high street in a raucous shimmer of yachtie bodies haw-hawing their way around town. . .
I prefer there to be a village spirit in a village actually, but then again perversity rears its. . .
Whenever I venture mistakenly into town, I shiver with remorse that I don't stay away for a whole season, the crush of the Great Washed. . .
Unexplainable xenophobia leaps out (not bidden) from the breast of a pacific artist blah. . .
And so to the typewriter.

A curious event last night. . .
An old chum from Roehampton, not one that I had promised to keep up with, rang. . .
asking about a chap she had met there, did I know where he was and so on. . .
Well I was pleasantly surprised you might say, she (SJ her appellate) and I had a lengthy and funny chat, OK. . .
But after she rang off. . .
her personal confession to me, why had I not associated with her more at college?
I didn't know, though it seems from the Friend's always on-the-spot deductions, that SJ reminds me of Puffin ah. . .
Could be the slow and deliberate way of talking, sometimes annoyingly and exasperatingly slow and elliptical. . .
it's when I caught the bug, I claim wistfully. . .
Yes and the constant sense of the need for reassurance, displayed openly, rather than with mostpeople's furtive and cunning insistence on concealing that need until friendship is trapped in some sort of commitment. . .
Assorted friends and other people taking shifts of two and three hours to assure SJ or you Puffin, that you were fine really. . .
and then privately, to the one or two intimates in conversation, finely argued accusations, pointed in mad logic. . .
that they don't care either, which after many sessions of listening perhaps they don't. . .
Being put to bed eventually, peacefully and without fuss. . .
the red stream of tears having put paid to communication of any reasonable commitment and character. . .

In other words, worthy friendship takes its split shift between helping out and feeling exasperated. . .
Still the connection of loving or liking takes a hold with patience through. . .
the interminable days and nights, curiously enough the days seeming lengthier and fuller of traps and trials than the nights. . .
With patience through, with patience through, with patience through. . .
The interminable nights and nights and days and days, endless days of occupying the djinn/genie of slippery genius. . .
what must he think up next to fulfil the ever open depths of need and desire?
Time, strength, cash and patience. . .
yes uncle Herman we need all these to write, to paint, to draw, sketch, harmonise. . .
in every endeavour the fierce battle just to get to the typewriter, the canvas, the instrument. . .
to start, to begin, to begin to think. . .
Away from the demand, the demand of reassurance, of the supposed need for attention. . .
The red stream of tears, the peacefully putting to bed, the vigil that takes for granted a return of affection. . .
The interminable nights and days, scraping away at the resistance, soiled and solid with emotion. . .
All this I thought of you, Puffin, a sort of mental character sketch by default, something I was finding difficult to clonk out on the old typewriter. . .
somewhere along the line I knew I'd have to try it, try it out, attempt the small exorcism that the spirit craves, to get rid of the itch, the repeating itch, the regular repeating itch of concern for the lost cause, the unreassurable. . .
Within the general exorcism of good taste ha. . .
Also the rather charming style of poise and potential direction taken by the intellect and intelligence, often misused (I used to think, in smartass days) or perhaps not used at all (yeah, smartass (second draft) of the ungifted kind). . .
The Jewish strength of alpha wave superbrain still shining through in the most admirable way, was that how you thought about yourself? Compassion or pity?
There's a world of difference.

The bay window shines with reflected sunlight. . .
the stereo has taken its ethnological cycle one stage further with (hold your breath) a 'complete Muqam performance by an ensemble from the Xinjiang autonomous region of the Peope's Republic of China, this is the music of the Uighur people and their court at Kashgar on the famous Silk Road' etc (radio 3 speak and all that is concurrent to same). . .

Now the 'guqin, an ancient Chinese zither with a repertoire stretching back into the mists of time, is played by Gong Yi from Shanghai' yes yes. . .
This was second draft, third draft rendition is (by complete coincidence or whatever, see earlier notes on synchronicity) of Ravel's Mother Goose Suite, with the Japanese garden piece in the middle, played by Isao Tomita on his new-fangled western synthesiser ahem. . .
Totally appropriate, both, back from the fragmentary to the frankly marginal in terms of the western view no doubt. . .
but Puffin, you are the real centre of this play on a play of words and worlds and splinters of consciousness, what happened to the jolly character sketch (digressions)?
It's beginning to seem that all the real details about your part of the story are becoming alarmingly transferable to later and later sections of this book, where they will probably disappear for good outside the covers, put off indefinitely until they cannot appear either for anachronistic reasons or because they're not relevant in other ways. . .
Is this the simple expediency of (accidentally on purpose) losing the central form of the narrative, so that I can continue to buttonhole the other 'you', the gentle reader, in ever more irrelevant and seemingly unimportant trivialities concerning my alternative obsessions with the act of writing and that other subsidiary pursuit, living?
The breath overlays the talent, the talent overlays the method, the method overlays the content, the content overlays the form, the form overlays the style, the style overlays the image, the image overlays the obsession, the obsession overlays the quandary, the quandary overlays the dilemma, the dilemma overlays the question, the question overlays the answer, the answer overlays the habit, the habit overlays the day-to-day life of the artist, the day-to-day life of the artist overlays the materials, the materials overlay the circumstances of perception, the circumstances of perception overlay the vision, the vision overlays the breathing. . .
The breathing, of course, overlays the breath, simple isn't it?
Yeah yeah the Puffin, you walked through here for eight years. . .
the kidnapping I'm to save for another section. . .
much the better thing.

The poem, naive and supposedly tender (the nerves were tender anyway) that I wrote to you six weeks before we met or knew of each other's existence. . .
'My promise will ramble on for the last times together, in secrecy we fled oh for such a long while we have never seen each other', like a dream of prophecy. . .
The end was also the beginning, narration stretched its elastic towards you without considering the niceties of matter or manner. . .
'The harmony has gone from the point at which I focus, listless, the waiting

can only stare at dying', yes and flying too, the dream of adolescent embrace passing the waters, emptying of all the necessary vision, and contact with you. . .
'And for the praise of waters will I move my voice glaring, piercing radiant with colour, and in the evening wintertide I will sing forlorn from you and bless the moment', ah but a moment of what?
Prolonged delaying until events don't fit in the denouement anymore, hiding from the conversational tone?
And yet 'bless the moment stinging, of search for you in every crowd that mad silent, shifts uneasy through every street, all the faces will I scan so quick, so usual they seem to whisper no rest, no rest', and then the final sally, where I didn't know, in 1975. . .
Of fourteen years, of half a generation later, I would be sitting here, discoursing insanely about sibling city, 'there are so many sisters and brothers, but no wife, within rapid danger I will call on your name'. . .
All will, yet all in the future. . .
but such a rapid future wheeling away its diurnal course I could not account for rationally (as if the passage of time were rational). . .
it came upon me so suddenly, it was the present almost, not the damned future swimming away uncatchably. . .
That's why I defer to your most intimate psychic details. . .
When the real epiphanies of our lives concur, it is in the present at all times. . .
Hopes, ambitions and fears are invariably in the past or the future, but the present creeps up, yes almost sinister and passes through our veins without remorse or regret, the attachment of superb synchronicity making a meal of our longings in a maelstrom of turbulent desire and immediate gratification towards the psyche. . .
Oh yeah it hit me soon, perhaps it will hit me soon, supposedly a thing of youth though I'm not so sure. . .
love hits everybody as the song says (Sting/Police early 80s) but some refuse to take the trust. . .
Or make the trust, and love?
I've grown tired of the word (as you may have noticed) although the Friend hasn't, she who is the great adviser, and talented in that process. . .
and very few other people are prepared to let it go seemingly. . .
Puffin you flew, magically. . .
you drifted unsupported, you landed and I even applauded during a small lapse of smartassishness. . .
but it was for you, or my own gratification I smirked, idly?
Next, the wedding. . .
yes I have promised, I promise, I will promise, the three tense tenses, the obligatory smile of sincere apology smoothing jammy and/or bloody over the empty, billowing page that may sweep on finitely until the final

morbid collapse of buttonholing. . .
Yes but I've made vows before and broken every single one of them, until
another final collapse. . .
imminent. . .
immanent.

My promise will ramble on for
the last times together.
In secrecy we fled oh for
such a long while we have
never seen each other;
the harmony has gone from the
point at which I focus.
Listless, the waiting can
only stare at dying,
and for the praise of
waters will I move my
voice glaring, piercing radiant
with colour;
and the evening wintertide
I will sing forlorn from
you and bless the moment
stinging, of search for
you in every crowd that
mad silent, shifts uneasy through
every street.
All the faces will I scan
so quick, so usual they seem to
whisper no rest, no rest;
there are so many sisters and
brothers, but no wife;
within rapid danger
I will call on your name.

Hawkeye:
poem for St Jude No 5

The stealing shadows jump to a standstill, the warm wet night makes a killing only in the background. . .
The same window that is sun and hedge in the daytime makes a dark interrupted rectangle, merely rendered more oblivious. . .
but the shooting stars of a car's headlights screaming up or down the lane in occasional flashing insanity carrying the morbid bacchante of yachting festivity, another ten Pimms under the belt. . .
or lagers, what makes the difference?
A key to another night, tucked away in fond nostalgia, of the yearning spirit mind, bent to its elastic extreme, Roehampton bound. . .
My memory of leaning out of the small cell-block window into the lunar and very distracted night. . .
the human howlings from the high rise opposite. . .
Flats of ordinary Roehampton life, discrete from college jinks, a mixed aperture of crowds colluding. . .
a high wire jaunt separating two very different types of living, two very different types of conflict. . .
From behind the cell-block that we called home, Hawkeye. . .
The mysterious bubbling stillnesses of Richmond Park that we could see from somebody's window, leaning giggling into the night, oh how we laughed blah. . .
The park, haunt of lonely joggers and as lonely lovers, the holding of another's hands above the rim of moon's denseness shadowed on the darksome ground, wound with absent choruses of. . .
you're a Catholic I'm not, what's difference except the rest of our lives tra-la. . .
The placid yet deluding circle of the moon hovering above, ah yes the string of remorse I could write to you about that haloed moon, plump and menstruating its forceful jelly across the still speckled night-time and

chimed sky, above our aching eyes, stretching in the darkness to see each other's arms waving, I would say not in the least capable of warning the other's drunken pose. . .
to stop, never to start again with the word love we would use only to hurl a gentle abuse, the heaped piss of morning's dilemma, whether to leave or stay another veneer of a hand reaching across to hood its frame over the other's. . .
The moon, is it ready to pounce?
Owl-eyed, the leer across the leaden sky, do we feel its leaden pull though?
The sucking sensation, of lips pulled back in a smile too subtle to be a sneer. . .
oh creator, if we could only feel your tides as subtly, as sincerely. . .
The huntress (was it Diana?)
Her javelin poised in a very different way from Cupid or Psyche methinks. . .
And your portrait Hawkeye, framed in that gibbous moon's haloed freckle, picked out by Diana's style. . .
Strangely enough the name of your only woman friend, mentioned earlier, did you make- believe howl at her?
She perhaps the only one you didn't have to howl at with the throaty laugh, no threat. . .
though maybe my suppositions are only aesthetic after all. . .
The rip of laugh, it's packed to your vocal chords with the pathos of clowns crying their lives at 3am, maudlin etc. . .
but you pretend you don't care about any of that, though I know better, smartass or not. . .
Nobody has such a difference between the timbre of the smile and the anguish of the eyes as you have, without admitting to the core of pain which is so different from the one you say is the Catholic. . .
But I don't know because I'm not of the faith, you would say. . .
here is my one chance to assure you that as a human customer of the ultimate selling machine called Creator blahblah, fill in the rest, you know it down there in Bill Blake's deep core of the heart. . .
all right I give up, have it your own way, I know you will. . .
This little doubtful sketch appended to that night that stretched to two hundred nights, the wistful gazing from the moon-lighted window named my shadow, waiting for the return of inspiration, the nod to go on breathing and okay, it's worth it after all, both breathing in my new set of air and looking also once more at that famous (to me) smile, the corners of the lined mouth vaguely twitching with delight at the recognition of an admirer, a courtier once again paying court with his longing,
nothing devastating different from previous moments, but building on them all the time until heartbreak. . .
Appended to that night, the overlap of words, ringing the page in two. . .
Scribbling once long ago in lonely fervour, preparing to decide, to stay in

and pen the long romantic poem, I mean romantic in the sense of the non-schmaltz, wanting to put the essential, unforgettable elements of the grand, collective unconscious scheme- of-things which had filtered down through to this little receiver over the years, and still remembered, not wanting to lose the accumulated wealth of fantastic detail and general charm of actually existing and not being dead or otherwise unengaged with the toxic intensity of life's energetic kitsch. . .
wanted to put them on the paper, not missing a trick. . .
undisturbed drama of existence, exactly as it is not lived, so preserving its essential flavour and taste, food for the god in all of us to smoothly assimilate, scorched to the eyebrows with intentions that are to the middle of good and bad, or. . .
No, never the alternative, a romance to one person, heaven forbid. . .
even in these random crumbs, I'm very careful to put out that the desire is directed to a multiplicity of personalities, the conglomeration of you all, not the best qualities only, but you know what I mean. . .
There is something in all of you which is indeed essential to all my understanding of the other. . .
The other person, the other being, the other lover, the one loved, the beloved, there I've said it in print at last haha. . .
The beloved.

'My one o'clock story has grown old with the ticking of the watch'. Tic tock. . .
Settling down to the ecstatic containment, resting with your memory by the side of my pen, purring amiably. . .
your javelin lying by your own side my Diana, nestling its possibly lethal barb pointedly aside your turning leg, the adjustment of REMsleep piercing the brain with its hints and journeys. . .
Its refinements of virtue beyond the ordinary, in which you self-starred so adroitly. . .
in exact limitations of the dream you had of being the subject of the chase, except the everyday business practice of selling, yes I mean stalking, essential for survival. . .
This dream number five forming beneath my pen as you slept. . .
maybe you were aware, dreaming openly of my pen moving across a still restless sky, drawing apart and away the menstrual moon silently in audacious copy of your seed, stretching its point to a line, scarred and shattered as the face I glance into ten times an hour across the space of my room, the wash-basin mirror hugging its eclipse, slashed towards my face again in reflection, carving the notorieties back into position, getting ready to face the night, and my other reflection, that is, back to your looming eyes and nose, and yet later, smile, echoed in the moon's black physiognomy. . .

Yeah, scribbling in lonely fervour, preparing to decide, to stay or visit you?
In cell block lonely, sulking, slashing the face of my self. . .
Or caught in your lair, equally carved with the blade of your smile, cut to ribbons when caught sulking also, in one of those moments between the passionate stare and the shuffling of feet, equally sulky, equally repeating the morbid moment of aloneness just on the cusp of swimming over into loneliness. . .
To preserve or deserve?
Preserving the chaotic stumbling bastardization of silence that feels the lovelorn's head while waiting for the beloved, fills the cavities made by your feigning desire to want the return of energy, the exchange of deceit we sometimes call love, mostly lust. . .
forlorn grieving when short-term nostalgia is definitely not fond, not found. . .
Or deserving what we can get from the other. . .
an endless bruising of the psyche, recurring again and again in echoing non-conclusions about the ongoing state of, really, our own selfish concerns within this mutant box we laughingly call a body, slashing the curves off until we find pleasing the hermaphrodite straightness that suggest sacrifice and sincerity, what a combination!
To restrain or request?
Restraining the nerve to ask, hitting our collective heads along the bouncing wall halfway to oblivion, knocking up the summit of praise from oneself to the other oneself. . .
not laying the foundation but bricking one's self in to a suggestively definite mortal entropy. . .
wasting away, they call it haha. . .
To request the pleasure of your. . .
oh forget it. . .
And leave it out, I hear you cheer in Chigwell, yes yes the hurried maxim of delight, hounding the obvious welcoming home of the spirit, not lost in some vixen's hideyhole of danger. . .
exposing himself to the hatred of years' worst eclectic Catholicism. . .
Contain or invite?
Just sleeping at last 5 am, dozing through 180 degrees, a slight spin in the left and then a slightly greater spin to the right, over a period of an endless half-hour, the little extra spin on each side, making a final circle or vortex now, swimming against the tide of eventual dream by mistaking a code that says rest and gain strength. . .
spitting out the rudest delays in concord by merely ignoring them, throatily. . .
The hoarse cough of sun-up binding the maniac pretensions of the moon-gazer in requiem to his obsession. . .
Leave alone at last, only to dream of the same obsession after a few

seconds of release.

'You are asleep, not to awaken until the dry leaves from another year patter against this window'. . .
And until the pen returns to its sheath, the only time a description of your spirit may be enlarged. . .
only the writing will do it despite your protestations that I'm wasting my time, trying to make time stop (as you would style it). . .
the only time ha when that happened during a 1971 acid encounter with the playing of Tonto's 'Zero time' I might add, inconclusively. . .
But this poem begats the dream. . .
the dream swirls around in the mind, the spirit absorbs the mind and dream together, and subtly shifts of its own accord (singly and individually, and in tandem with the other two) describes a nudging arc or spirallic turn within the Circle, that little club you've heard Cavalier and I turn a phrase to, perhaps even nudge into existence who knows. . .
You're not quite sure about that, for once unsure. . .
As you once said, if he's the bad spirit and I'm the good, but you don't know really. . .
There's more than black and white magic happening here, even the vortex swings crazily, it has movement, there is never stillness and movement combined as in the best and indeed only absolute condition of perfection that we all, however sulkily, aim at. . .
More than black and white. . .
it's colour reception we're talking about right now on the old transmitting wavelengths here, yes Cavalier?
O and to be driven between the so-called good (me) and the so-called bad (Cavalier) is not descriptive enough Hawkeye. . .
we've some of us seen the havoc that can be wreaked from that viewpoint. . .
the dualistic little headlands between which the rapids of your life as a river bubble along and get lost in a flurry of foam which loses the focus of what you are trying to feel in your life. . .
As the sombre cadences of Mozart's Mass in C Minor undulate, build up, peak and somehow never dissipate, the energies also built up in the spirit are a template both for art (particularly) and the act of writing through which each of us in the Circle are irretrievably entwined, leaning on the resources of the others' insularity (never Time, strength, cash or patience!)
And also the self-effacing soul itself, drawn through the mesh of the spirit like the sometimes recalcitrant passive sun passing through the otherwise morbid heavens taking its eight minutes to shine down vapidly on us, under the sun nothing new indeed, except slight variations on the eight minute long theme. . .

Yes 'against the window' the sun patters during the day, but the moon withholds her/its pleasures, for they invite and/or do not invite themselves. . .
But you into her orbit of luminous intensity pull yourself up, gorgeously elongated body sewn into a sensual spiral of flesh, drawn up quickly into the inky sky. . .
The lunar pull, the maniac glint of hawk's eye reflecting my own pale and wan face, looking worried and haggard into the raptor's stare. . .
just the swift talon, the scratch of death. . .
Yes 'against the window' I pit my madness, test its aims to the limit, pervert myself to the sky's horizon, the yawning gap through which I would fall into your taste buds. . .
gobbled up, mutilated, devoured, every chewable half-inch, longing for the last scrap to be interned, actually and for ever. . .
The lunar pull, not only held to be openly expressed, but in the tightness of the inner tension also. . .
'A thin occluded moon speaks glowingly from our starlit sky', yeah the stars too, twinkle twinkle, but rubbed out sudden by the force of Diana, scratch your eyes out sister Diane, who are you selling my poor Hawkeye to?
The bogeyman at the end of every sinister fairy tale subverted?
At the end of every sale, every closure?
Not my Hawkeye, sister and I, to be protected from the alleged protectress Diana. . .
Yes and then 'belonging together vaguely, we and the moon itself, sharing novelties, broodings, ambiguous shades of nightfall', yes that fits, it all gells nicely. . .
the little wanderings from cell-block to cell-block, the well-worn paths between certain doors and windows. . .
In search of night-flies like ourselves, the sentinel boys ringing round their waiting and waiting, everyone else but us very normally and properly asleep, except for those sexheads, small budding relationships doomed to the one year itch, a sort of prolonged someone I met on my holiday. . .
Yes I mean the sentinels searching, the Cavalier and myself. . .
he stays always, I invite, there you go. . .
It's our little perfected system of witchcraft we never talk apart, never talk about. . .
though it figures there large and distinctly unwholesome to anyone but ourselves. . .
'Ambiguous shades of nightfall, getting faintly lighter by the minute', uh oh time to scuttle back to the safety of the bed, as when a child I dived under the bedclothes when it got dark. . .
Here it's the dawn light which finds me shivering in restful but apprehensive regard as the taps start running and the toothpaste makes its weary way

to a hundred and twenty mouths, more or less. . .
Not more than half a dozen nighthawks in the place, what a bore. . .
Yes we're the so-called aesthetes of the bunch. . .
Cavalier and his sidekick, a sort of latterday and very pale/watery English Neal Cassady and Jackie Duluoz, bugger the rest, they can just sleep. . .
Ah ha our hymn to the menstrual goddess full-lipped full-lipped, we've shipped the image up a pace or two, knocked and nudged the tiny Circle back and forward, rocking the fates in their chairs until they fall asleep for a minute and we can get in with our bitty crooks and entangle the threads a little. . .
simplify in some cases those we wish in our impy pimply way to set on the straight and narrow hee. . .
Cloistered grin and sinking pit, help our aim to sink the ship. . .
But meanwhile the incurable romantic, as I was dubbed by an unprepossessing JC/Sneer, toils on in his ludicrous and deluded ecstasies. . .
'Over and over the pale horizon letting me know you are near, stirring in sleep, in league with the tides' embrace', not exactly embracing them, yet slipping in the javelin to stir up the waters, even in unconsciousness. . .
who gave you that bloody spear?
It wasn't the priests, with their squeaky clean surplices and dirty, splenetic little confession boxes full of the needless corruption of the mind, murky interacting labyrinths of frankly unnecessary guilt lined up along the confines of the box on wheels you hope will be a salvation of sorts. . .
Again I'm in my childhood bed, god it's safer there, even sager (misprint next letter on the qwerty). . .
The ship of night, the vessel of safety looming, though never quite safe until all clothes are transferred to pyjamas. . .
the delicious danger of leaning far out into the pitchdark room, uncovered and just about to be safely rescued by the forces of fantasy into the cocooned bed that's a voyage just about to be completed. . .
It's a pagan and hearty sort of javelin you priestly fathers have given her. . .
But as you drift away on the tides Hawkeye, something reminds me not to be a black sheep for once, a slight something like affection steals over my cloak as I rummage in the REMsleep for a certain gift I've mislaid over the years through self-devouring cynicism. . .
Even that smirk in the corner of my mouth gives way to a tortured and small response to your innocence in sleep. . .
'Woe betide anyone who takes advantage of the innocent' said Cecil Collins, remarkable artist and who am I to contradict?
Not to worry shade of Cecil, adrift and floating in your gorgeous orange starry world now that you've spent the last of your breaths with us. . .
Who can tell when one is taking that advantage?

Only by overcoming the mind's vagaries through surrender, I would have thought. . .
Your originality is intact, my elder chevalier.

And between these bubbling bursts of lyric mode, the dream drops down. . .
is handled creatively enough through the monument of leaning against anguish and chiding the development of anything that might take us away from the already formulated extract penned straight from the book of books. . .
Allow me in this smallest of prayers to respond to the only true aspect of your nature that I can grasp in this tiny, and growing tinier, hand clutching at a straw, at a wisp, at nothing soon. . .
Your half moon slides to a cusp and then darkness, waiting to breathe again, while it grows unperceived on the other side, the mercury silver of its mirrored groaning for the possibility of breath, definitely not choking. . .
The other side, your own via negativa, necessarily opposite in every way to mine. . .
the moon on an elastic string is waiting is waiting to stretch its return. . .
From that other side of the mirror this mercury sings of its fortune in epic rhyme that does not cease to inform even though the mirror is forlorn, the reflection is empty of all image. . .
I'm left standing or squatting, the shiny space in the glass re-forming, gradually, all movement or closure gracefully fluid once more, my only stop is to think it through to consciousness again. . .
The cocooned bed that's a voyage just about to be completed. . .
again.

My one o'clock story has
grown old with the ticking
of the watch. You are asleep,
not to awaken until the dry
leaves from another year patter
against this window.
A thin
occluded moon speaks glowingly
from our starlit sky. Belonging
together vaguely, we and the
moon itself; sharing novelties,
broodings, ambiguous shades of
nightfall, getting faintly lighter
by the minute.
Over and over
the pale horizon letting me
know you are near, stirring in
sleep, in league with
the tides' embrace.

Hawkeye:
filling the screen

Without a poem, without a dream, without a novel, without a text. . .
without a fantasy either, what would I do with this blank minute?
Or a blank life?
A tabula rasa, the empty mirror waiting to be filled, innocence wanting
corruption, the fall of wom/man, the cracked lens of the camera taking

the picture of the cracked lens of the mirror. . .
side by side, before the mask of legend, before myth stretched its filmy wing over us all, the departure signalled a discomfiture on the primordial garden. . .
We were settled in, a Hansel and Gretel so lost in the wood but getting used to it. . .
no one bothers us any more, we can rub along, you know the score, no words to be said in this primal recovery from an excess of interest in the maudlin god who had seduced us both by his condescension. . .
The Lilith figure and me. . .
solitude, introspection, methodical recognition of the essential. . .
Before the book, the holy book, the comfortable possession of the grail, floating abstract in our collective memory, along the wind brushing slowly by as if a melancholy wing left behind for a second by the struggling eagle. . .
Having eaten the dove we watched each other grow old before our sheltered eyes, the hooded breath now coming slower, without pause though. . .
it's steady, this approach to a sudden death. . .
Extinguished the look of love and likeness between us. . .
the Gretel outlook had tamed me from the year dot, were they twins in the womb?
Attached as if by white magic?
Once more the embarrassment of asking each other, are you really another person or part of myself?
I'd like to know, if only to clear the psychic headache or. . .
To clear the transmitter is another simple aim. . .
Even now, in this crucially time-cusped civilisation we call the Aquarian age (not without malice) I long for the companion I know is part of myself. . .
Yes I long for the companion again and so forth, for what it's worth, the cry of the disabled minority. . .
yes I affirm the truth of the dilemma, it's you, just the special person, wheeled out in fright against the background of my obsession. . .
Rather than harp on about it, I should shut up and let you breathe, but my hand is on your windpipe.

My hand is on your windpipe, you think I'm joking or having a game with you. . .
the lying of top on top had been a beginning, now it's a matter of struggle. . .
I can't deny that my feelings are ambivalent to say the least, to protect you, to kill you, the snuff movie rears its ugly profile. . .
you've seen one, you tell me, I haven't, I wasn't even willing to hear about it until you brought out those feelings in me. . .

My hands dandling unobtrusively on or around your slender neck until the vital moment when I remembered oh such a long way back it wasn't even in our nostalgic remembrance of history. . .
it was the fruit of ovum shining in your eyes, the invitation come full circle, containment wasn't in it. . .
Your Gretel hawk-like nose with its incisor breath intake, forbade me to let you alone. . .
the neck arching for a splinter insertion, the masochist leans gently forward with her veins throbbing, the thumb grips, the hands surround, it would be all over. . .
You weren't sure how far I'd take your game, I didn't even know if it was a game. . .
couldn't you surround yourself with your salesmen chums, where were they now?
And I couldn't let go, I could let go, I couldn't let go, I could let go. . .
the stretching point of snap looms near, touching almost immanent. . .
it fences with me sternly, the swords are indeed flashing very close to each other, in and out of range twice a second, high intensity, I'm going home mother to your wondrous bed. . .
The fingers are jamming, the horse laugh yells, you're rolling and pitching, the arms shoot up, I'm just a second away from the deadliest sin, it barks at my legs, confusion swirling in our universe, the vortex crooks and swerves nastily, red and poetically. . .
Our ship is swirling too and takes off into the windblown night, my arms scattered, I'm left dangling, besmirched, drivelling on to the floor, holy threshing floor of bittersweet longing, your carpet drooling to the beat of a bell tolling its ribcage throbbing for me. . .
On the floor, lolling, your face triumphant above me, around me, filling the screen of still unslaked desire, your face it cooks my face with its heat. . .
you are a survivor, the cracked mirror, too late, another instant and I would have melted with saintly love. . .
My angel. . .
I almost saved your soul's breath from escape, how could I not end your life when I want you so much?
This life is too short by the infinite years needed to be at your side, requited. . .
This life is too short, I'm tossed like a seed, aside, your collapse is complete. . .
I yearn to hold your tongue, stop the sentence, stop the language, score it from your memory, incised, collected and boxed. . .
I'm bound to you, take me in your loving wings, enfold me, let me languish no more. . .
to escape the need to ever breathe once more with pain. . .
Let me implode, your pinioned breath does escape. . .

it's loaded again, shoot to kill, unmistakably yours, having let go, you've dispersed the ardour, every time I pick up the paper I think of you, one round down fourteen to go. . .
Hawkeye your dream has come true at last, you do fill the screen. . .
Your silver talent shines in its mercury heyday, the torrent of a smile will stretch and save again and again. . .
the housebound gaiety carries on, very near the end of my part in your reflected game of purgatory.

Cavalier:
Chigwell and the dilemma of Narcissus

More on this Narcissus business. . .
Seems like a bit of a handy metaphor for the smashed mirror, if you peruse your Ovid diligently dear reader, you will find that before he expires, several thousand tears are shed at the grim prospect, before and after the realisation that it is himself he stares at in the glass. . .
As the tears fall, the image is of course blurred and broken, it would seem in a similar way to the envisaged dreamtime flexing of the mirror into its numerous shards or splinters. . .
Not that I'm saying that I'm a narcissistic type. . .
aha 'not that I'd say', what a giveaway. . .
Anyway the Friend is currently (second draft) perusing a certain psychoanalytical treatise that purports to explain just why we feel so messed up in our middle age according to some sort of narcissistic relations with our parents. . .
Hope it's not born out of the Doc Tom Harris school of transactional (monetary, huh) psychoanalytical monetarism, geddit?
Incidentally, have you ever looked at yourself for longer than ten minutes at a time into the mirror?
Every time I spend a little while at the proper hairdressers I'm confronted with this image or mask in their glass which definitely does not correspond with the fair self-image I meticulously build up as a cover-up. . .
a sort of opposite to the re-covering, that is the unearthing type of recovering, not the covering-up style, an illusory system of manic appreciation, until I have to spend more than that ten-minute limit on the sensual twinning of the self-unsatisfactory type image. . .
Why is it that I shy away from day-to-day mirror contact?
I kid myself that it's because I'm a chap, can you believe it?
Like 'boys don't cry' or some such drivel, one of the male image-making postures that don't seem to wash in this day and age, ha. . .
And anyway, is it just looking, or can it, need it, be construed as posing?
We'll probably never know collectively, it's a deliberate kind of personal observation. . .
Both you Sparrow and you Hawkeye tend to spend inordinate times in front of the quicksilver, Sparrow more privately it's fair to say. . .
And you Seabird, your famous one and a half hours in the bathroom I'm told was a useful average, but what you did in there remains open to conjecture, we never talked about that. . .
Which leaves Puffin of these major characters, this quartet of happily ensconced notables, your reticence of the glass was as conspicuously absent as mine I believe. . .

I believe, yeah definitely brother and sister twinning behaviour there, not needing to look since everything is seen in one another. . .
What do you do now, little sister?
Has motherhood made you more aware of the body language of reflection?
Or is the information exchanged in your baby's eyes?

What would have happened if Narcissus had been a woman?
A tenth as much whingeing I hear you say. . .
But wait a minute, isn't there a passage in Grandfather John's 'Paradise lost' when Eve looks into the lake?
Yes 'the clear smooth lake, that seemed to me another sky' she says, when she sees the pleasing image, 'there I had fixed mine eyes till now, and pined with vain desire, had a voice not thus warned me'. . .
Yes it's God the Father with a capital F allright, keeping his beady eye on the scene of Eden, it's book four, about line 450. . .
the 'liquid plain', that's a nice way of putting it Grandfather John, no disrespect intended. . .
It all points to the same thing, we're fallen, unless the hand of God intervenes, it's as plain as the nose on your face that you can only see, in profile, by disturbing the mirror incidentally ha. . .
I take the hint, mirrors are natural. . .
What's that the French cad Lacan says about the moment we first see ourselves as the objective image in the mirror?
Something about the fall of the psyche anyway, that first sudden moment of intimate guilt, a sort of post-Freudian tricky-dicky technique of the banana-skin, self-help therapy when we're eighteen months old no doubt. . .
No sympathies there as I expect you've gathered, no I'm a Doctor Carl fan, man and boy, why not let all that realisation shine in from the unconscious?
It's our collective base anyway, we're tied to it in a semi-infinite kind of way. . .
why become uptight and upright about them leaning into our conscious brainwaves?
It's bound to happen sooner or later, and when it does it simply shapes us. . .
well something has to, we don't create it ourselves do we?
We can't be unshapeable all our lives. . .
Ha, good for me to talk, who's making such a ballyhoo out of the changes a tiny little transplant of that unconscious elemental force makes in a human being's life. . .
though I remind you gentle reader, it's the only one I've got, and yours is the only one you've got. . .
Just a harmless play, it's all fiction you'll note and a good job too, where

would we be if this were all true?
Answers on a postcard, not more than 150,000 words of close typing. . .
How are you doing Cavalier?
What a saintly job you're up to, I think of you still, you can be sure of that. . .
awaiting your letters with a decently detached trepidation. . .
Are your sequels to unconscious elements turning out to be as you bargained?
Is the tea and cigarette haze still bending its way across the ceiling to return lovingly to that typewriter we know and love (it was constantly breaking down, dear reader)?
Reconciled to Chigwell all points east and west. . .
I can see you now, discoursing with the walls, about why you're giving John Dewey a miss this year, I'm just reading 'Crime and punishment' old chap, what a hilarious text, or maybe it's just that slightly post-war clipped London slangy translation, wonderful stuff, like the 1938 version of 'Death on the instalment plan'. . .
In neon lights, let's praise the skies quietly about that book, the fountain of all our present cynicism I should say. . .
Praised be, the reviled man Celine, accordion blowing full-fronted pulpmachine. . .
strange to think of the men whose double life consisted of the switch between medicine as an occupation and literature as a passion. . .
Doc WC Williams, Chekhov bless his cottons and so on and so forth. . .
Okay I'm off, at this late hour to contemplate, to sit, to think anew about the narrative. . .
that would make a change, wouldn't it?
To dream a few more dreams, have some fantasies aloud and quietly. . .
and live a life a little less cautiously I hope. . .
When will we know if we've pushed the known limits of our efforts back just a small piece more?
When it's too late, says the pessimist. . .
We've already done it without realising (but we will realise), says the optimist. . .
Just breathe a little more refreshingly, we could all do with saying, when's the last boat home tonight?
Let's ride with Fyodor and Louis-Ferdinand somewhat less comfortably, shaking up our own styles, loosening up the preconceptions till we don't know ourselves so much amen amen. . .
The little scope begins to open, the unfoldment might take place, let's have another pledge, not to pledge. . .
The toast. . .
here's looking at that still-empty mirror, hoping beyond hope for another splinter to shine and explain itself to our satisfaction and realisation.

Hawkeye:
poem for St Jude No 6

With old Wolfgang in high and solemn spirits with a couple of the Missa Brevises (I can't be bothered with the proper Latin plural, failed it at O-Level twice, know what I mean?)
Yes he sings to my soul, or whatever part of it is attached to the alpha-wave reflex button that is. . .
Just half an hour this time to say, Hawkeye how about dream number six (look it up on the hymn-sheet)?
Perhaps you've kept a copy of this one. . .
You used to say in moments of unusual softness (even when I was around) that you'd stick them away in an old art history book (have I told you this before?)
Becoming like an old bore, old man who can't remember the anecdotes. . .
That you'd stick them away, and then one day, wanting to browse Pierra della Francesca or some such, or just idle away an hour waiting for a footstep, you'd be taken by surprise in seeing one of them drop out of the book, fluttering quickly to the ground. . .
Catching of the hawk's breath. . .
The one person who would be a confrontation, a mirror to you. . .
the only one who, well what's the use, what's the consequence?
I get a little impatient sometimes, with myself mostly. . .
or the memory of you, it won't stand still so much as float gently, undulatingly, shimmeringly. . .
Acrimony in nostalgia is stiff, bolt upright in fawning jealous superciliousness yeah yeah.

'And yet the look, always alive, an edge of stars glimpsing our green horizon', the morning after the lonely vigil, Mr Proud Poet slumps akin pompously to Dante in his exile or self-exile, unhappy and so forth. . .
posing in a clumsy solitude, down the deepest dumps at not seeing the form of you, but we both needed the sleep for chrissakes, the rest from

mutual angst and anguish. . .
You and I both, nervous in our collective small-time agoraphobia, just as we finally and jointly admitted it. . .
But in what?
The stars take over from the moon in this boy's perception of the bird soaring high above, ready to skate through air-currents with its sharpness unimpaired. . .
crystal clear the eye probing deep into the hedgerows from a thousand feet, swinging its pinioned accuracy against the steely clock. . .
The moment of truth scattered throughout a life unafraid of mortality though fearful of getting lost in this purgatory of a world. . .
lost lost, the final admitting of such being worthy of the most absolute friendship, ironically that which we would dissolve on contact. . .
Not enough space in that green horizon, that the trouble. . .
geez, you are turning into that dedicatee through force of narrative, you know that Hawkeye?
What you consistently and mockingly demanded, within the throaty laugh and put- down. . .
make me your dedication you'd say. . .
And perhaps it will be fulfilled yet. . .
Though Cavalier hovers, patron-like in the background, he stands off-stage but not obscene (the etymology, look it up you bastards ha). . .
never so much in fact, but he waits to write the letter that will seal the fate of the first 35,000 words of this gorgeously tapestried dungheap that is a text of shame etc
etc. . .
But still your stars and moon metaphors shine distinct on this dark backdrop, a perfect starry night, the first of the year, and I lie patiently in wait for your breakfast. . .
And then forgetting you, amble off on another adventure far away from your concerns, who was it?
I can't remember, the little tune hovers from my childhood, the melody a just reminder of the solitude of writing song. . .
'Our green horizon, sometimes greener' with that perplexed look like the one who's pushed everything to its limit and then finds a pinch more for the caretaker not to sweep up. . .
That's my boy/girl, bury it uselessly, like Dostoevsky sky-laden student Raskolnikov, the kind boy bowled over by his duty to the world. . .
'The unflooding sky moves wholly to blue once you can let go the month's moon', striding Sylvia Plath, unknown as yet, finds the first blood on her sheet, the shapeless faces of the three auntie muses lie in wait at the bottom, at the foot of her bed. . .
They look away in disagreement and their gaze alights on the baby Hawkeye already fifteen years away from the twinkle of her mother's

mad eye, bewitched by the sense of a miraculous upbringing. . .
Is that why your shade, the alter ego that pretends excess to a miracle throbbing of delight, meets up with the prodigy Mozart in my dream?
The huntress Diana bathes her straining limbs in the pit of grease in order to swim faster through the air. . .
the image of a javelin rocket to the side of ambience, awaiting the command of true passion in our revelation together. . .
The tip of your spear and my heart touching imperceptibly tip to tip. . .
United forever in a tense embrace, not spilling a drop, but a drop of what?
'Not to seem incongruous, you lick your teeth', yes I've seen that lick, half pretended in the shadow, without a single person watching except me, trembling in confinement about being invited to your presence, the transmitter in your breast awake and alive to the magnet catching the point of absence firmly located in my brain. . .
Acute to your call, for that time I remain in league with you, your doctor-figure, healer in all accounts, against all the odds. . .
'Lick your teeth, the hunter framed in grey, in red, in semen, in blood, occasional talk close to eyes kindly meeting', what more can I say?
No commentary, that's how it was, but is it still like that?
I need to know the transmitting, does it continue, or lapse in time (the great healer ha)?
I am out of touch, inclining more and more to fantasy conceptions of your state and plans and being. . .
The occasional talk now droned to silence, awaiting also inside the pyramidic outcome what your forebears ordained for you in genes, in inheritance and heterodoxy, what more what more?
'The moment has shifted and my flashback is incomplete'. . .
well that strangely could be my feeling now as I rush in, flashing back to the moment that was (at that time) the present moment, complete, gorgeous and inviolate. . .
The liver dilates, my eyes are sore, the vision distancing, the power of nostalgia diminished against the backdrop of a fading memory. . .
Afraid of the dark, the mind startled by its lengthy acquiescence and sudden awakening, can this be love?
Nah, just the old order bunched up a bit, plumped up like a mouldering old unwashed pillow, shored against my ruin ha. . .
Yeah yeah the only pillow talk in a whole year worth the asking. . .
How about a complete flashback?
No such thing I'm assured, in a few instants of lucidity, the sort of anti-matter of epiphany. . .
'Again and again it slips beyond belief', the power of hypocrisy slides its greasy head around the door, anyone for slipping off the cliff backwards without the merit of hindsight?
Is this fond nostalgia or frank bitterness?

Whoever they might be.

And yet
the look, always alive,
an edge of stars glimpsing
our green horizon, some-
-times greener.
The unflooding
sky moves wholly to blue once you
can let go the month's moon. Not
to seem incongruous, you
lick your teeth – the hunter
framed in grey, in red,
in semen, in blood, occasional
talk close to eyes kindly
mending. The moment has shifted,
and my flashback is in-
-complete: again and again
it slips beyond belief.

After your names:
mirror fictions

On all the late night jaunts of the imagination I have known, you have always figured in some essay of the first relative degrees. . .
not to know your regeneration makes a puzzling, a delectable silence amnesiac among the noise that is the country life at night. . .
Listening from my window as always. . .
the wrong end of the trip home, the moon hovering for its final triumph over me, just as a pursuit of sanity seems to be breaking through the murky overlay of your condolence. . .
One two three four, I count the hermetic sheep as they slide, sleepless, over the hurdle of love. . .
unabashed they stare at me as they limp homeward, but at least they're not exiles. . .
I hasten to add your comments about dividing my attentions are restful to the eye, if not to the heart.

Your four forms literally unscramble the brain as I rest from chaos and begin to contemplate order again. . .
Squaring the circle, they call it. . .
so I'm well aware that the number four is a step up from three, however holy the Trinity (or the Circle) can be. . .
Once the Assumption of the Virgin Mary took the papal biscuit in 1950, those sons of their fathers have taken a turn for the ritual worst. . .
A four-corner fight and that's a fact, the tag-team wrestling of the heart. . .
and I'm trying to pretend to be the spectator. . .
In fact anonymous, as only one quiet chap in a crowd of wailing partisans, whereas I'm in the action, always have been. . .
up to my neck in supposition and evidence. . .
But that's always the way with writers, strange bunch, you've got to watch

their every move dear reader, no one to help you when the chips are down. . .
The reader figures it out, the end of the line detective who shelves the expectations so that a slim chink of possibility charms through to give the gliding appearance of an illusion. . .
Of what?
But the four continue despite the fierce interjections of a conscience willing to confirm that one has been sweeter than the others, or more intelligent, or beautiful, or worthwhile in that slimy way that we often cry out, pretending we love someone, whatever than means, when they are in fact just another brick in the tunnel. . .
But I've lost all of you to nostalgia. . .
the likelihood of another glance at any of you seems more that of a remote indictment of my foolhardy hopes and ambitions. . .
What would I do if I never saw you again?
Well I simply wouldn't see you again, what's the problem?
No, to see the difference, that's the problem. . .
Wait, another poem from long ago is to be deciphered. . .
did you ever want to know someone so much that they ceased to be another person?
(Not by nearly strangling them, I hasten to add). . .
Beginning to be (and not in that static way of stagnation). . .
instead of becoming, they stop moving towards being another of the crowd and start to attract being to their own person, the centre of an aspect of sublime unquestioning reality, without giving up the humility necessary to maintain a healthy detachment to the awareness only of ego, rather than that wide-horizoned essential completeness of paradox termed stillness in movement. . .
Well, that poem has finally been speared and sighted, harpooned you might say. . .
though it's the illusion ho, with a swift unembarrassed stare. . .
The eye of the harpoon gives up its quest of alienation and begins to bend back its ray of desire and make the circle, broken as the tip surveys the rest of its javelin length reflected as 'twere in the shaft of one inch wide mirror streaking down the long one- dimensional side. . .
As I look into this pocket mirror, the haircut gleaming smoothly, the back of my head which I would not normally see in all ages, until the ingenuity of the mirror game asserted a reality around corners, the captured image spills indications of personal power. . .
Always the grasping for evidence that I exist in front of this glass, even when no reflection answers in accord. . .
The fist flailing in desperate avowal, in a climax of anger against my disappearing wisp of self lost to the winds. . .
Was that what Hawkeye meant about being lost?

Just a step away from madness, from ga-ga, and I didn't care. . .
The gleaming point of my thumb as it does not slide off the glass, but sticks through to the other side, the scraping of muscle against the bone, the rasp of a dissolving body, of blood against its alternative in stone. . .
All the previous times plainly ridiculous, now that I've explained the cause of the smashed mirror to myself. . .
Though unfortunately it's the worst kind of plausibly complex fiction. . .
It's simply not true.

Sparrow:
poem of avalanche No 6

A little of the Vangelis 'Antarctica' as background for you Sparrow, in honour of this latest re-collection of the unconscious elements. . .
I lounge on the window sill, gazing distractedly out of the lane into a far greater space reserved for memory of you. . .
Sitting quietly in your room, Roehampton cell-block, working, fiddling around with the placing of this and that. . .
dreaming by your window, waiting for the Forkbeard to arrive, playing the 'Antarctica' then too. . .
Your room directly above mine as it happened. . .
some noises apparent, others not, the scraping of the chair, but not the pacing, but no you're not the pacing type ha, more the sitting and wondering. . .
But as you slept, as you sat, as you worked, I wrote below, reams of the stuff it seemed, imagining the incense of the, well what used to be known as sentiments. . .
although I can't imagine what we would call them now. . .
Letting them waft up through the ceiling to surround you above with the mist of friendship. . .
they were patchwork verses of one kindred spirit to another, you know that, not enough to make the tears flow, but just enough to trigger the reason why the destiny evolved a synchronicity or two in our direction. . .
What were the odds that you read any of them?
I once scrambled a reply to your question about them at the end of a very long evening, though how can you take them in with the reciprocal

feeling when I can't even say them?
So they've been popping up here and there in this tissue of fictions, where they shine at me as jewels out of the turgid stillness of my other wonderings. . .
accepting my gaze like the timid creatures they were, not bearing me to change a word of their complexities.

'Well, I was sure you couldn't know the difference in the size of rocks as they fell', but why always avalanches?
Never a chance to ask you, so I'll do that now, in the secret embrace of my text, of all the forbidden questions. . .
have you noticed how about half the comments here are questions or perhaps enquiries after the fact, to use a politer phrase?
Yes in the secret embrace, textual pillow talk can flow more freely, have you any doubt about that?
And the chambers of my own heart are no more secret as a result of that, excepting the multiplication of secrecies that necessarily builds up as a consequence of letting one or two out of the Pandora's box of inconsequence that is my continuing letter to you. . .
Out of the fright of my life, perhaps that Lacan'd first objective moment, the concept of which I was fiddling around with a few sections ago, there grew an understanding at a very unconscious level that you had to say the answer in the mirror. . .
Now that it's smashed, let me pick up the pieces of your images and not let them be destroyed or forgotten forever, because in the subjunctive view (that is, we ourselves as we glimmer subtly out of this life) destruction and forgetting are the same process. . .
our brain cells shimmer for so long in earnestness, then they sadly and slowly give up the ghost, so to speak. . .
The fright, it's the avalanche I'm talking about here, the constant threat of falling rocks, bombs, nuclear warheads, yeah lots of dreams about that Sparrow, nobody else I know ever has many dreams about that sort of event. . .
the second world war blitz stuff plus. . .
Maybe it's that my mother fed me these stories of the Pompey blitz bombings, which happened to be the few exciting stories of her childhood, although I'm sure there were all sorts of epiphanies I could never know about, just like any other human being in their personal view of their life. . .
She once told me about seeing the physical form of Jesus behind the communion rail, but that is definitely a whole another story!
But how would you cope with an avalanche in Sparrow consciousness, or a bomb attack?
Hide the pretty head, in a cleft in the rocks, a hole in the brickwork, those

frightened yet shining eyes, big and scared in the daytime too, clicking and unclicking the knees as they appear when agitated. . .
the little beak knocking the wall in supplication, let me in, the sky is falling. . .
A head start on me, who'd never flown anywhere. . .
And always that consent in the beginning of flight. . .
was I imploring you to take me away even though my lumbering weight of conscience or whatever it was would have dragged your body down to greater and greater depths of openness and ravaged pride?
'Rocks as they fell, a squeezed, endless corridor of blows from the dizzying heights above', incidentally. . .
Talking of corridors, a memory of waiting for a drink, that evening of the hypnotist show. . .
yes that's an episode to remember, to comfort me in this old age of adage and textual recognitions. . .
The cringeingly awful northern-style comedian-cum-hypnotist, part of the Roehampton events scene, teacher training evenings out. . .
How could we possibly have met again on such an occasion?
But what a relief to see a kindred spirit that was you. . .
oh yes and to my great surprise you volunteered for the hypnotist's attention, and a surprise for you too, what a fright for me, but you weren't taken in. . .
unwilling to go under. . .
Anyway, waiting in the corridor some time after, several people angry with the very sarcastic hypnotist (he made a comment about the thinness of your hair, which I know affected you strangely. . .
“no it didn't” you said). . .
While waiting for something, somebody, some drink, some you, the crying corridor warping as though the usually near-vertical avalanche would instead hurtle down the corridor horizontally, the image in some strange inversion of the old Batman/Spiderman trick of seeming to walk up the sides of buildings (and really tricky camera work, as of genius innovation). . .
But why were you being so long?
Oh yes, getting the drinks. . .
and then you came back, sudden recognition, it's you and not the ghost-troll of the mountainside bearing down with the insane gift of boulders. . .
Everyone must have thought. . .
But of course they were all involved in their own news, and as usual with dreams (the bastards say) all important events happen in a split second, which is supposed to diminish the importance, though of course we know better, or do we?
Weird conglomeration of hallucinations and fantasies drowned out in a

single instant by the sane return of the chiming laugh of Sparrow. . .
as the evenings wore on, it became more of a throaty chuckle, the uncovering of the cockney girl, a war-baby, or was it peace-baby?
The 1945 prodigy anyway, you laughed the falling rocks away until I came to in your folded arms some time later, a split-second later obviously. . .
'Heights above, the perky nightmare that is avalanche', that's what I mean, perky, quick/succinct, above and beyond the belief browbeaten into us that this life is to be taken at linear narrative face value at all times, no jumping back and forward, no condensation of tricky time away and towards ourselves, others and the rest. . .
'Guarded against the idea forming in our heads, of safety', yes safety, now there's a word to conjure with. . .
without the presence of God, is there safety?
Better persons than I have argued that one, Sparrow.

A change now to Delius's 'Cello concerto', another old favourite of your romantic years, yes yes. . .
This poem, it seems to have been written in a contrary spirit, but the movie B incense constitutes the same atmosphere, mixed in with the straightforward stuff. . .
'This distant, unquestionable symbol', a mite deliberate obscure way of saying what it stands for. . .
the last peace whirling in our brains as we fall off the edge into sleep. . .
'Did you shout, as the last meteor fragment split in a haloed archway, closed in dreams around your pearly head?'
I've heard of auras (that's what I was blathering about), sometimes don't even recognise my own alphawaves, but why should I?
It's all for you not me, except. . .
I'm standing in front of that mirror (don't forget) and what's showing is a splintered view of your body, not mine. . .
your pearly head, shining away in rhyming slang, dahn London way. . .
Okay the final two lines, as Delius wanders off in syphilitic silence. . .
'No, neither did I, but we were always on the same wavelength', and that just about sums up everything, yet. . .
There are so often going to be leftover ends, this is the nature of how we exist. . .
what would happen if everything was tied up, what would we be left to do, to act?
Bored, with our hands tied behind our backs. . .
nothing to but look at each other or in our mirrors contemplate the emptiness of inner space, what a waste. . .
But you and I, the same wavelength, transmitting different melodies, though always part of the same. . .

Huh, your memory is making me feel sentimental. . .
Correction, I'm making me feel sentimental, since I know by now I must be talking to myself yeah blah, only myself in this sad serenade. . .
. . .wavelength.

> Well, I was sure you couldn't
> know the difference in
> the size of rocks as
> they fell, squeezed, an endless
> corridor of blows from the
> dizzying heights above. The perky
> nightmare that is avalanche,
> guarded against the idea
> forming in our heads, of
> safety. This distant, unquestionable
> symbol. Did you shout, as
> the last meteor fragment split
> in a haloed archway, closed
> in dreams around your pearly head?
> No, neither did I, but we
> always were on the same wavelength.

After your names:
flight of the djinni

These forms, what are they?
In one moment they are poems, resting between two identical sets of quotation marks, as though we are to take especial notice of them. . .
in truth just to separate them off from the other stuff. . .
And the other stuff, is it just fodder, the sort of prose that fills in the gaps, where the reader's mind idles until the next batch of poetics, steamy gossip from over the metaphysical tracks, when the mind just has to sit up and take notice or else it misses the (concealed) point?
Is it a conscious shift on my part or do you draw them out of me?
And is this necessarily a mutually exclusive opposition of ideas?
On a theme of pastime, past times?
I must admit I've been feeling increasingly comfortable with the format that states, here's a poem from the (usually recent) past, relevant, it's probably about one of these four characters. . .
let's have a bit of theoretical argy-bargy first. . .
Then straight into the quotation marks, using them as a sort of set of

themes, while the typewriter races madly on in improvised rambles (later, heightened, corrected, enhanced, enshrined in successive hair-tearing second, third, fourth drafts) that sometimes have to do with the matter, and sometimes the manner. . .
Yes yes a very comfortable sort of routine. . .
the coffee on the table, the Friend snoozing either on the sofa or in the bedroom, and off we go, except. . .
This was going to be about just a few epiphanies, and now there's no end to the little blighters, every phrase has to be full of them. . .
commentated upon, extemporised, extrapolated and so on and so forth, what a palaver. . .
Well let's toast to the wind of change, it brushes out the mixed metaphor ho. . .
And meanwhile new forms. . .
While still keeping the insistent voice contiguous, because actually my need to tell you this has remained consistent, through the years preceding this tale-telling. . .
the weeks employed to sketch out the rough first draft and perhaps even the years after this, although it would be gratifying to experience that it had been written out, this desire to define nostalgia and remembrance so poignantly. . .
because an objective would have been achieved, a devilment would have been exorcised, and the pleasant life returns. . .
But what if I should be disappointed once my aim has been targeted and achieved?
If it is to be achieved that is, the grass is always greener and so forth. . .
how many other sides of the hill are left to a burnt-out bastard like me?
Vonnegut's metaphor of the sloping roof, age fifty being astride the roof looking down the other side, the greasy and quick slide forward, trying not to lurch, quirky but true I guess. . .
The only reality, when writing, significantly. . .
to hammer home another 2000 words and forget about ideals. . .
one more chapter/splinter caught in the heel, waiting for the djinni to appear in the
glass. . .
Faithful, faithful, they arrive. . .
winged, deliberate.

As the passage of wings marks me out for wax, I long for the ground in an arc measuring my love it swoops. . .
One wing above, one below, the pattern of its tumble reaching across the eyes to propel forward on to a mobile beam of light adjusted. . .
Adjusted until I know it's the sweetest path as Silvestre would have it. . .
the spurned lover does not recoil, but walks the path every day to the loved

one's door (in Cavalier's case in Sylvie, the forlorn Granada freewheeling the inner link motorway, placing gifts on the doorstep of twilight engroved love). . .
Walks the path every day, he beats his wings past my own forlorn trees awaiting their call to breathe out again, once the sky commands the change of growth. . .
Fixed eye on the horizon, going south for summer, or twisting for food in the twilight, flashing the single eye that beads, straight in a line, not constrained, always the sure foot and precision in wing. . .
Once more the adjustment till ground travels up to meet me. . .
and I'm sitting on your earth once more, your buried heart beckons to me transmitting all the affection that has throbbed underneath that harlequin crust called desert. . .
It hides the djinni who are moving so subtly beneath the breeze, calling your name. . .
its multiple meanings overlapping in the sound of the wind wisping over the land, who has encompassed. . .
Encompassed all the wind has settled the fate. . .
The fate of the djinn who says she loves me.

After your names:
waiting for the gaze of Djinn

Let me tell you about the djinni then, one of your number of disguises apparently, melting in and out of human and angelic form from the dust to the air. . .
Djinni being the plural, djinn the singular one. . .
You're probably more familiar with the word genie, though as in all western renderings of third world fairy tales, it's bastardised to say the least and full of typical moronic wish-fulfilment, as if anyone could have one of these locked up in a lamp at their command, with a happy ending to boot. . .

AS Neill's theory of rubbing the lamp being analogous to masturbation fantasy (what does that make the djinn/genie?)
The spelling is French, Hugo wrote a poem called 'les Djinns' set to music by Faure, a rapt ghostly chorus rapping it across the desert in an unholy swarm. . .
'cries from hell, a voice howling and wailing, the horrible swarm, carried along by the aquilon no doubt, oh heavens, is sweeping down on my dwelling, the wall groans beneath the black battalions' and so on and so forth. . .
Until at last the locust-like invasion is over. . .
of the phantom horde and 'their swarming mass roars like the deep murmur of water one cannot see' and indeed images of invisibility, if there can be visions and it's not oxymoronic, are evident in all the literature. . .
The latest example of excellence, Robbe-Grillet's novella of the same name (but singular) where watching and understanding are allied in a tight grip within which weaves blindness and cruelty, sex-change, misplacement of deja-vu in a memory of the future, plenty mirrors too. . .
The demons traditionally born of fire. . .
read section 17 verse 28 of the holy Quran, whereas man was created out of clay and angels out of light. . .
Djinni therefore take on an intermediate ability of being either good or bad (or neither). . .
and putting it too bluntly, exhibiting a sort of of arbitrary moralism, in their own eyes, and the ears of the listeners to those tales upon tales in the infinitude of night, the thousand and one varieties. . .
An ethical position unknown in western folklore it seems. . .
Etymologically yeah, it means hidden or concealed, an allusion to the fact that in legend they are not recognised as individuals, the personal genie a relatively recent innovation. . .
Watching, the dominant advancing mode. . .
non-understanding, retreating paranoiac mode. . .
For instance, djinni 'possess the bodily needs of human beings and can be killed, but are free from all physical restraints', ah getting nearer the storyline now, you perplexed readers. . .
something about images disappeared in haste from a mirror reflection. . .
The murdered twenty-year-old in Robbe-Grillet, actually called Djinn, a joke punning name on Jean/John male and American Jean female, due to sex change before death from girl to male mannequin, also disembodied voice, as you are now, my sisters. . .
also an ethereal archangel type, capable of avoiding such a fate. . .
The speaker/narrator Simon, equivalent to me here sisters, does nor seem the sort of human being who, knowing the proper magical procedure or superior use of intellect, can exploit the djinn to their advantage. . .
Djinni may manifest in any shape they choose, yet their personality remains

hidden in the form assumed, like splinters in a glass, dodging reality and yet adding up in some bizarre way to a totality of image. . .
Simon's Djinn is not quite visible, partly because the man is wearing dark glasses. . .
No body, only a voice, the muezzin wailing at dawn to call believers to the mosque?
He's being watched by someone invisible, watching others under the cloak of invisibility, the infamous evil eye, whereby the eye contains the djinn which contains the person possessed. . .
Gazing/silence/inscrutability/fixed eyes/steely looks, obsessions of Robbe-Grillet's text and the Islamic belief from which it all stems. . .
A room full of blind men, the world, being deceived by djinni left right and centre. . .
no control, as the dervish music ascends, everything is a whirling delusion/illusion, maya and whatever the equivalent Arabic word is. . .
hypnotism and self-entrancement, the rapt gaze of fondness into the looking-glass of
self. . .
Staring with the pale eyes of the djinn (witch and so forth) the evil eye a feminine, could one say sisterly, affinity?
Of course, in the frightened and frightening misogynist world of some Muslims. . .
The seclusion and veiling covering the evil pale eye of the Mohammedan woman, Djinn having lovely pale eyes. . .
all my sisters except Puffin with them too, although she too with the glint of green and hazel, and the hawked one too with pale eyes turning to deepest brown on occasion. . .
The evanescent spirit of Djinn, her large green eyes shining with a strange brilliance. . .
but if deep-set eyes, particularly dangerous ho. . .
Delighting to pursue and punish humans for some harm done them intentionally or unintentionally. . .
blindness the stick with which we are beaten, Simon's perverse realisation about the connection between blindness and understanding. . .
Quoted 'I was discovering here a paradoxical consequence of blindness, a blind person can no longer do anything secretly, those poor people who can't see constantly fear being seen, in order to escape this unpleasant feeling, in a rather illogical reflex, I closed my eyes behind my glasses', yeah what a chump, but. . .
What about my peering into the mirror to see nothing?
Your own preening and pawing of the self?
Dear reader, we're bugs caught in an amber trap by the gaze allright. . .
the djinni in a world of their mystery, personifications of what is uncanny in nature. . .

slippery or the imagined causes of all sorts of uncanny events, that cause their sudden and unwelcome appearances, it says here. . .
'Pagan survivals in Mohammedan civilisation', written Edward Westermarck in the glorious Edwardian years, this stuff before (and most alarmingly) 'if you look at yourself in a looking-glass at night, a djinn may go into your eyes'. . .
perhaps male fear of feminine domination?
Hmm, R-G's Simon not being able to take his eyes off his portrait double, haunting his portrait double, haunting his own eyes with a version of self mirrored in a photograph that had not been taken. . .
or rather, was a picture of the future, fallen into material form, probably with the assistance of those naughty djinni. . .
The new understanding of the memory of the future, an instantaneous memory. . .
The djinni too (according to the folklore) residing in the blood, the highway of disease also, ritual shedding of the blood-red images of the djinn. . .
let them go back into the lamp, the sisters snipping the threads of the narrator's fate, wait no longer for the whirling dancers to close down the spiral of gratitude into the bud of the mystic rose, let loose the sudden sway of their hypnotised consciousness and resign their gaze into the mirror of the other forever. . .
But come down to me djinn, before the moon falls its eclipse once more, you can be my eyes, squeak away your wailing instruments of dance. . .
the minaret glossing the days upon days lost in reverie upon your splintered faces. . .
Trying to regain my own face, among the shards, announce your vocation to free me from the ingratitude of evenings spent formerly gazing at my lovelorn narcissistic image in the footbath of rejection. . .
Wait until the moon, full with the misgiving walks out amongst the glitzy star forms. . .
then I'll be here to be haunted in nostalgia, though I know. . .
I know, never again will the djinn forms bisect my soul with their wailing improbabilities, too much has been given away too soon. . .
At last the summons to your absolution. . .
the perfect confession to a being of absolute moral ambivalence, the only way to give up the desire to look just one more time for a glimpse of you. . .
A glimpse fading splintered into a wilful distance of surrendered horizon.

Puffin:
the kidnapping

In a former time, unleashing the wedding bells of necessity, a little time to begin to remember the one who wasn't the djinn made in form. . .
the sweet sister annihilating prejudice, adjusted to the asking only for absolution, would have been a perfect Catholic, the natural confessee, but the wrong religion guided the wrong life. . .
I'm thinking about times a lot later now Puffin, after we'd made our separate ways and paths. . .
a sudden phone call in the middle of the night. . .
You're in hospital, you've done something stupid you say, though how many times had I heard that?
Still, this is after eighteen months of non-contact, why did you call?
I ran to London from that small flat in Pompey, arriving full of foreboding. . .
I walked straight past you in the ward, did not recognise you since you were black and blue all over, literally, from a fall, pushed or jumped (juped, the typewriter first wrote subconsciously)?
Yeah well, jumped but pushed. . .
Amazing tale of living alone in a big community house with plenty people, safe enough, then uncle Sidney cruising round one morning. . .
your mother is very ill, you join him straight away, it's a ruse as you later find out, a damned pack of lies, the bastard(s). . .
Finding yourself locked in a room at Momma's place, holy jumpin' Christ a kidnapping, but who pays the ransom, and what is the ransom?
The rabbi called in to exorcise, yes I use the word advisedly, the naughty apparitions of former absorption into meditation practices and a genuine desire to healthily kick Judaism into touch. . .
he's a trendy young chap, in order you see that you have to relate to him oi vay. . .
Pretentious hogwash of a plan, but you fell for it sweet sister, at least up to the relinquishing of your own thought, that hogwashing typical of the upright hypocrites. . .
In the folded screenplay, he probably would fall in love with you, but you're not Ingrid Bergman by a long way, and he ain't no fucking Cary Grant either. . .
Ah but he's probably still trying hard not to fall for you, you're so beautiful and well- mannered in your humility towards everyone. . .
Anyway he's in there several hours a day, instructing. . .
you're left to your own devices the rest of the day, locked in the room, only do you protest?
You're stunned, humiliated, forlorn, it's all repressed as usual, down the

stinking doleful cellar of cultural guilt. . .
dread and secondary confession-pleasure, the nauseous abortion of a faith that refuses to acknowledge love or life. . .
His speech 'come home to me sister' or some such, said to imply looking after you, but you've got two broken ankles, you're there to stay in the hospital and I'm the only one who knows about it apart from the non-shocked members of your family that
is. . .
The thoughts repressed lower and lower until they can think of only one thing, the fixed idea so to speak, the threat to self that is ultimate, to doing away with all barriers towards death, the objection to the stream of existence we all share in equal proportions. . .
Once more the sidelong look at the wrists. . .
trying the catch on the window, waiting the unequal chance to step out of life for good. . .
You kept a blunt knife, smuggled, in a drawer (just for comfort). . .
I didn't really believe it, couldn't take it in, as I was hearing the account of this unlikely tale, never anything like it. . .
naive, had not yet dissolved in the trashcan of depression (not for many years yet), the grey morass of no movement and not sleeping. . .
Of not sleeping, the grey morass staring at the events of a past life until they meld with the present and the future life, straining the heart valve until the pipe bursts and life floods past. . .
Red life oozes past the djinn's harped laugh. . .
You and the knife, simply in tandem, never in doubt as long as it's there, sitting out the exorcism for the viewpoint of oblivion, waiting until the mind cannot stand the possibility of another moment, and then calmly. . .
After some days, the window catch left open, accidentally. . .
standing on the sill, on the ledge, on the edge, not even feeling a prayer, but watching, understanding carefully as you simulate the ground swimming up towards you. . .
The Puffin feet treading the air in thought, can it fly?
Can it play to fly away from the ledge?
And the fall, quick, your head bouncing in the cloud before the metal crunch of bones inside the feet, ankle jarring right up through you to jawbone, all the way through. . .
horizontal, vague shouts of alarm, the flashing blue light of annoyance in the summer sunlight, crowded, holding the stretcher, never alone from that point, doctors, nurses and the dormitory of fools reading their own obituaries in the concentration camp of desire. . .
Desire, my harassed but trying-to-be-sturdy bright-eyed self image stalking in the ward, unbelieving. . .
Just the antidote to sanity we all craved ha. . .

Then the mundane detective work of avoiding Momma and Sidney in the visiting hour, relying on the ward sister to let me in early. . .
they're all in on it (the nurses) to our dilemma, hating the giant Siamese twin of schmaltzness, guarded apology meanness and menace, the undertow of exorcist threat veiled with candies. . .
The sweet talking twin of Edie-and-Sidney and their stillborn, crop-haired neck and black cloth, the black priest. . .
how are all priests, whatever the religion, however differently dressed, always black with a spot of white?
I am flying out in the elevator just in time every evening, never so much in platonic love. . .
but it's too late, we played our game through to the bitterest ends, no excuses. . .
We played that game, winging away together in the night-time sky. . .
and it didn't count, we were superfluous and costly at the same time, never ones to count the cost. . .
You were wishing for a reprieve from exorcism and you got it I suppose, never yielding to the temptation of hypocrisy, despite the bastard family enticement. . .
Enticement, the mealy-mouthed tension of dogma pouring from the priesty lips, frothing almost, and goading so gently. . .
asking your hobbies no doubt, not pleased inwardly to hear you say you didn't have any, apart from listening to the living God's contemplation and waiting for his reasonable instructions haha. . .
that fooled his exorcist backyard mind, an ounce of tears on your part. . .
What happened then is a fantastic blur of really non-memory, adjusted to politeness years later in our next flight, your splintered shade grown large with dignity then, shadowing a clumsy attempt on my side to understand once more, or probably just to gaze forlorn in fondest hopes of brotherhood at last, perhaps. . .
But they, the creeps, had the best of you. . .
both concessions and guilt, and yet. . .
Yet a hard-core built around your resentment that year, that they could not peel back without killing you. . .
it was so much a part of what you were after that, you remember all this?
They did not control again, and instead, an amazing amicability grew up between you, a product of the compassion you had for them as drivelling amateurs of the emotional life, who had inevitably come unstuck, insulting themselves and you. . .
and in fact, in mild strokes through everyone around them, the beloved family and strict culture included. . .
After the weddings of course, everything faded into grotesqueness of being ordinary, but that's another story too, and your baby also. . .
but the kidnapping, the black episode where all the mercury rubs off on my

fingers, the black and blue hysteria running up my arm, hiding from the glance left behind in the mirror, oh where can it hide now?
All the corners are taken up and it will die standing to be exposed. . .
The limit of expulsion within fond nostalgia is thereby fixed.

Hawkeye:
the final courtesies

Let me add an end of term report here. . .
A sort of current poetic output, not trying to overshadow my previous efforts you understand. . .
no quote marks on this little page, just trying to fill in the time before midnight, literally, so nothing or nobody is turned into a pumpkin. . .
Words forcing themselves up before me, in speeded time, to annihilate the ones current in the brain at such a pace. . .
I can really see the use of word-processors to substantially quicken the outpouring. . .
did you know that Kerouac wrote 'On the road' along a continuous sheet of paper?
Didn't have to stop for sleep, kept right along (probably some help from the bennies). . .
The spontaneous bop prose he was always guffawing about is a lot of baloney though, in my opinion. . .
The struggle to interpret what is different between talking to oneself, in a mirror, and addressing some real self or selves looking back out at one. . .
How to resolve, and stay sane at the same time?
If the reflection is looked at for long enough, either a Narcissus over-enamoured or others keep appearing in the delirium. . .
is this the stage I've reached, what a joke. . .
The most unreliable person to consult, in delirium I'm bound to be hallucinating, yet quite rationally. . .
And, if everything's fine, in focus and so on, then I'm still hallucinating because sooner or later I'll be whittled down to that duality of choice anyway, between Narcissus and the smashed mirror with your collective image in it, sisters. . .
Alone here all night barking at the moon without making a sound, some sort of ultra- frequency pitched, yawping, romeo trendsetter struck by the morbid thought of the exclusion-zone limit named schizophrenia, oh no not schizophrenia!
Definitely on the upward pea-pushing-with-the-nose trail to lunacy, the

summit of the pen- pusher's ultimatum also. . .
with or without the moon's menstrual help. . .
All fictions of my imagination anyway, probably. . .
just a little surprised at you greeting me so openly and warmly. . .
A somewhat mysterious conversation it's true. . .
but you woke me, how can I affect a surprise?
At 3.30 am, I should be asleep haha. . .
The moon, alone amongst my starry host who cackle gamesomely, wincing at the terrible possibilities, or is that terrific?
Or is it terrified for a little sake, or terrestrial, or territorial?
One more coffin in the nail of infirmity, the poem collapses, the soil erupts. . .
I'm leaving straightaway, they can't pin this on me, it's beyond the call of duty to be able to comprehend the importance of your conduct, the courtesies I am able to earn, the mind run wild, but. . .
But here I see you, yes into focus there, a nasty moment, must have passed out again, low blood pressure you see, lack of potassium the doc says, terribly sorry terribly sorry terribly. . .
And one more poem, yet unanalysed. . .
the freedom to leave well alone starting to infiltrate its wholesome path to my heart ha.

At once the mordant accusation, where have you been?
Across to London to see the queen, to talk about the possibilities of snuff movies yes. . .
I couldn't help retching, you know how it is (see earlier deathtrap mutterings). . .
When I finally found my breath again, caught it again, I was beyond or out of the circle of the usual obsessions, you know wheeling around, nothing to do all day but spin words and so forth. . .
annoying you as always with the elliptical statement, the foreshadowing doubt of all innocence. . .
Once again the pressure kept up by harassing you to doubt your own valid spiritual and mental capacities. . .
Anyway you said to keep the fried breakfasts coming at least. . .
the movie of our culture, the tongue licking the blood from the lip, your own or mine, what does it matter?
Or other articles of tenderness placed there by the man acting for thrills and spills incorporated, the salesmen gift for a good time. . .
I'm only an honest workingclass average semi-thrills and absolutely no spills my dear, though at least you get your basic money's worth. . .
in a long spell, not much action, but what happens after, you kill me?
That's somewhat unfair old chap, I couldn't possibly sanction a deliberate act of intimidation. . .

After all this hospitality, the girl said. . .
The girl said nothing instead, it all dissolves in a screen of acrid smoke, behind which a stiletto sears my last recognition of blood flowing before me, flashing its ugly red forehead at the stars one last time. . .
not to look up ever again, I could doubt it, the natural progression of associating with such a woman blah. . .
Her heels chattering jauntily down the street unaffected by my gurgling and rattling. . .
she'll catch her breath one day when she glances up at my transport-cafe photo stuck greasily in the lowest vault of all Christendom. . .
Sex and religion?
Well I don't know, just say that for some there's a hard core of pain and suffering which does not allow for being afraid, just plain fear. . .
It's different, I can testify (someone told me, in fact it was you in your dying embrace, yes). . .
The twitch of faith when the sacred cross looms high in the air. . .
whether to fall and crush, or lift and elevate one with it I don't know, perhaps both at the same time, the moving stillness or the stillness of movement?
And just then you told me (the latest swoon), are we having a whirlwind love affair?
I said (just to complete the picture of embarrassment), ah. . .
Several million souls sniggered just outside the door in my delirium, alone with the murdered ghoul attaching its silent tentacles to the spirit escaping from my throat. . .
the gurgling rapids of rattle foreshortened its rap across the load of the oesophagus. . .
Listen at the window to the moon howling. . .
it's on fire in the overheated night and I stretched forth my icy hand and quenched the haloed flames, quietly by only breathing a comparatively innocent and minimum breath/inspiration. . .
I told you Hawkeye, the end is in sight, don't let this be the. . .
But you posed yourself in front of my camera that day, made sure of your sensation of stretching the truth in a handful of dry dust scattered on my lens, the mirror of that sensation pumping the blood through my heart for a few days at least. . .
The only chance of capturing you, you on film. . .
one photo coming out with the shadow of my stance pitched against the sunlit earth, beside you, seen in camera as foreshortened embrace with a ghost, the flattened nonentity that I became in truth. . .
Against the sunlit earth, flattened beside you, once more declaring in visual image how I missed you even at this moment. . .
Accented without love or lust, excusing the fortunes written on tablets of talents beside the cryptic and underground pressure of mutual

agoraphobia. . .
Locking myself in your room, days on end, stretching the moment of leaving to a seeming impossibility. . .
days beside you, holding the moon's menace close inside me. . .
Already the memory of the future, glancing at a forgotten photograph. . .
The future had plotted some sort of revenge. . .
Desolate activities paraded this destiny below ground. . .
and I'm not talking about pot-holing or if I am, only of the spirit, the cool earth slipping easily into my mouth as I choke unknowing, the via negativa made flesh hoho. . .
And nestling next to her mirror, I found you crushed and crumpled beside the bedside cupboard, moaning of the New Jerusalem. . .
thought we had had enough trouble with the old one, always facetious I agree, but only to survive the bite of wisdom, when you made me lick the floor in my pretended ecstasy. . .
No no not that, though I did just the same, only it was my own floor, at home in my cosy B2 of the cell-block, just as you had always pictured it, you were easily asleep at the time, dreaming of the Friend (of all people) while caustically the rattle of denunciation fizzed in your ear. . .
the adulteress rises and gobbles up the evidence. . .
Away from these problems you looped a cause and effect in the sky to overwhelm all the sense of freedom we had fought for ha. . .
But just at the fatal moment, the chiming instant of forgiveness, you said. . .
You said that you couldn't remember how many people were ruined by your touch but I wasn't one of them. . .
made a little history by assuring me that these were the first signs of that disease. . .
Waking up of a misty morning. . .
and I nearly hid my face in the bag I was carrying just to see what I could find at the bottom of a letter to you, except that it wasn't there, already. . .
Already filed under T for trickery, always the signature. . .
Since you didn't care for me, I didn't receive a letter. . .
According to Cavalier, for you it meant distancing an untimely object of emotional bankruptcy, the ultimate blackmail to play every scene as the actress unless that tied me in knots. . .
which it has, increasingly. . .
So my token to you in these final unfantasised minutes here. . .
A poem written while waiting for you to wash your hair, waiting to speak to you through veils of anger and surprise. . .
indeed surprised when your own opening gambit was “should I get married to Mentor?”. . .
Dispensing advice I was always blamed for. . .

okay, one more time, don't. . .
But you refused to listen anyway (so I hear). . .
The long, slim and straight remark that only a certified promise could yield. . .
the piece of paper that states a guilt-trap had always been about my care and thoughts. . .
Not only the ego desire that springs from insecurity and shame, but an honest enquiry from one human to another. . .
The one question eternally framed around the four wings, encompassing. . .
And here they are, precisely.

But always in the ringing clear my
darkness melts, not combating the
precise charity of sound, poured
soon the absolute poison
of your sweet smile.
                But I'm not
aware of the beautiful enquiry.
Deep in the end part of my song, you
whispered sure and sweet, never mind
the coldkilling eyes that would melt.
I haven't the idea that they're so kind.
The one purpose of the gilded
edge: to surprise.
Something I didn't say has finished
the course it would have taken,
if you hadn't been there.
The actual transfiguration
dazzled the membrane given
birth by my accent.
You don't seem to have the latest
prize commanded one would have
thought it had expired one more
downswing into the pit of snakes
has taken place.
                Enough has been
                said after all.

Seabird:
snowwhite connection

Yes, at last the chime of fairy tale rings clear. . .
An excursion into the shrouded depths of the text that has no original. . .
the mist becomes just a little more entangled as one steps back further in time. . .
The mirror hangs on a sea-green wall, marbled, fantastical, obscene yet not off-stage. . .
the glass surrounded by the frame of a snake's mouth, swallowing or about to swallow it whole presumably, as is the wont. . .
Who is the fairest of us all, magic mirror?
The black and silky dress of the stepmother figure rustles in barely describable and exquisite lewdness. . .
“You are, queen” the mirror simpers, and it's her portrait shimmering away in acquiescence. . .
Though later on ho, who is the fairest of us all?
And it's the pumpkin pie kid and fresh greens eater herself. . .
her of the peaches and cream, and the spotless panties, who seems to glow, negative-like in image to the stepmother, hardly a sympathetic glance. . .
Snowwhite's own voice, her own, whispers sulkily out of the mirror, horrors!
“Snowwhite is the fairest”, the snatched snigger redundant in her careful self-caress. . .
The queen's rage is perhaps not at this impertinence but because another image appears in the screen apart from hers, and admit it now gentle reader, even if you hadn't noticed it before. . .

wouldn't you be bothered if someone else's mug appeared before you in your own spy- glass?
Yes, now I come to think about it, wake up at the back there!
Asleep for the last ten splinters. . .
while the eye supposedly scans the pages, it's roaming, you've been snoring your way through this and the four sections previously, how's a fellow to carry on working and concentrating?
Anyway the queen cops the needle as they say, and you know the rest of the story except to add, hum when the small pure white starts to co-habit with seven workaholic bearded midgets dressed in commissar-red, the bloodied comrades, singing the Internationale all the way to work the next morning, cunningly disguised by Disneyshoots as 'hi ho hi ho, it's off to further the proletariat's means and ownership of production etc'. . .
When they come on the scene and the queen hmm, thinks in her vanity, “well, let's see me in that mirror for a change”, she's shocked to find not only flowerknickers but the seven hirsute ones, canoodling in the silver screened nightmare. . .
We're all okay, wish you weren't here (the postcard from paradise) and I bet this spoiled yer breakfast you old (aristocratic) cow and so on. . .
How do things turn out?
Beats me, I didn't get to the finish yet ha, I'm still fascinated by the stunning image of the workmen posing with the white one. . .
okay how frustratingly wicked for the stepmum. . .
The mirror almost cracks and splinters with the distortion of that many representations of the good, earthy, lusty countenances of polite forest incest. . .
Luckily the serpent's huge appetite keeps the mirror in one place. . .
so the naughty queen (her only crime being vanity, as far as I can judge) does get another chance to blow the gaff, though of course she doesn't succeed, you all ought to know that. . .
It's part of the fairy tale, formula by formula, written in that oratorial contract that never was bargained for at the beginning of the tale. . .
some years back, even the Andersens and Grimms were collectors of them. . .
The stepmother gets her desserts all right. . .
the white girl gets to live with her true desire and without her false desire, all her life. . .
Until she dies, which is not in the story. . .
all right, it's for ever (desire).

Which in a (very) roundabout way brings me to you Seabird, of whom I have been neglecting. . .
Maybe it's because I've put more effort into trying to forget your gifts. . .

(But) that's not really part of the brief here. . .
yes keep it relevant, far too much digressing and how's the audience going to know if the story's pushing on at all?
If there's no action to speak of?
The lightest haired person I think I've ever known, with hair that was so fine. . .
gathered together at the back of the head, would pass through a baby's clenched hand. . .
You were the one to whom my own earthy dwarves or deadly sins (both seven in number) aspired. . .
the possible adulteress, the uncanny unfolded into appearance and reality, the understanding ear and the restrained and vibrant mouth. . .
The hardest eyes and the softest mouth. . .
the conditions of your unblinking gaze make me want to smash every glint and image reflected out of the smashed mirror. . .
But however much I attempt to press fond nostalgia into bygone memory, the dream is still there, so that when I switch the old conscious mind off, willing it to cease co- operating with the body to produce this awful waking reality stuff, elements flood up. . .
They flood up, red, from the seat of desire, bubbling, swamping the REM sleep mind with gratification, that swiftly becomes unrealisable, to say the least, where are you and your Norwegian?
Resting quietly away from the camera or spotlight of my intentions, very sensibly except. . .
Except at the time and place when you wash your hair, Rapunzel woman and see the tower staring back at you from the dizzy depths of the mirror's perspective, backdrop of memory. . .
Who's pulling the string, Seabird?
Doubtless the night flying creature will thirst once more. . .
feel the grip of the migration every dark and cloudy autumn day.

Hansel and Gretel:
the first and last story

And as to the brother/sister fling, shrouded as it is in a kind of mysterious overbearing intensity, dredging up the elements of full-blown psychic armour throughout the pagan history of oral tales, let me finally explore for you one of them, in order to illuminate a particular facet of this mirror where I see you before me. . .
Wavering slightly now that many of the pieces have been pulled back to some sort of admittance and even luminosity. . .
they shine for themselves now. . .
I'm talking about effulgence, not the reflection of other faces, like mine for instance. . .
you stand on your own two feet, you become a formidably dovetailed and integral being. . .
We face each other, with our small parcel of schizoid longings. . .
a hundred personalities bricked up here in each other's gaze, formulating so many plans against joys, grievances and so forth. . .
Throwing the darts that will hurt as well as point out the graces and deficiencies. . .
once thrown, forever landed, also. . .
One small story to rig up the sails, to let out the spinnaker, the wind fanning

across our faces collectively and so on. . .
It's a final dream encounter, firmly through the collective unconscious of our darkly festooned forest of pre-life desires. . .
the backdrop to every thought or nuance of living. . .
My knowledge of you, your embracing of me, at last letting me go, letting myself go. . .
I will walk away if the dream will still carry me back to my self, waiting patiently here all these months. . .
It's back to the present and away from the fantasy of leaving the arm across my back, the sisterly comfort, the very first tangible image of this text. . .
In this moment my shrugging off of the fantastic dream of you that I always thought was in me, just a trick of the light, a glance at the mercury now sizzling under a manic pressure of desires and longings both. . .
given up to the daydream, aloft in a signal position not flying, the wax running down cheeks already caked with the stuff.

One story, set in the latinate changes of our exile friend Ovid, later the Byblis and Caunus faction. . .
They couldn't help it, spent a long time agonising, well one of them did, of course it was the woman. . .
as in all good Ovidian disasters, the male stands proud and so forth blah. . .
But all this was remore and later anyway, how about the one which stretches back to before recognised time?
When the dark forests envelop all sensibilities. . .
it muffles all the noises which are not entrancing, not beguiling to the young psyche, still fluid and not trapped in its surfeit of experiences, as our unbudded and forlorn, floppy and convoluted adult fantasies. . .
two children, half running away and half straying, half banished from their stepmother's wrath, the poor helpless husband (at least he gets a few whimpering, self-pitying lines in this story, unlike the white princess and so on, where the dad simply does not exist, or has died, or has run amok, or cannot get a word in edgeways, or who has been nagged or talked into exile). . .
We do not know and are not given the chance to find out. . .
are the dwarves some sort of father replacement, while Snowwhite is a daughter replacement for a missing dad?
But ho, perhaps we're taking this whole game too seriously?
Hmm anyway, Hansel and Gretel. . .
Gretel being nominally the eldest, wisest. . .
the comforter and so on, though not actually described as such in the text, little feelings, hunches, you know what I mean, you all know the story. . .
No mirrors though, that's almost a shame. . .
not to worry, plenty of mirror images between the two and the wicked witch

is flapping her black rags (as Robert Coover would say. . .
Immaculately mapped out without names, just the old man addition and a good fairy addition, no stepmother, although plenty of the boy and the girl and the witch, see Coover's 'the Gingerbread house' for further information). . .
The bird though, in the old tradition, picking up the crumbs, remember the crumbs?
Our bird, soaring through the branches, thick and sinewy in the forest, spying the survival beads, balled and scattered, not at random. . .
he doesn't care, it's all in a day's work to him. . .
Memory of the forest track forgotten by force of market economy we might say, our bird sublimely indifferent. . .
the streaks of bad luck continue, there is no suggestion of impropriety here, just the gentleness of the force of big fate, waiting to gobble them up in the blind eyes of the wicked witch. . .
blindness and understanding, remember my pep-talk about Alain Robbe-Grillet's 'Djinn'?
The particular djinn of the witch flaps motionless over the two, invisible in her hackles and shackles, above the chitter chatter of the forest top and the silence of the forest floor, regularised by the intermittent sighs of the lovely Gretel. . .
She has your eyes, the ones of the brown-eyed hawk and sparrow, the green pale eyes of the seabird and the hazel eyes of the puffin. . .
all blended and shorn of their individual clarity. . .
Just the hazy, possessed, taken-over yet gimleted gaze of uncertainty and fear, metamorphosed by the light of the glimmers between deep and tall trees, abandoned for fear of the known squirming beside her. . .
The boy sacrificed in the supposed eating ritual. . .
attacked at high tea, fingers worn to the bone with deception, that's supposed to be me. . .
Alone with his thoughts, in the little lean-to prison behind the house. . .
it's a hutch, it's the doghouse, where the sister travels as duty, as a go-between, as the plenty mama of food carrying and sharing. . .
But over all the cackle of the wicked witch climbs sublime into the bright sunshine of the chocolate cottage, frozen as in a deep freeze to preserve. . .
The candystick bungalow. . .
as you face me over the bowl meant for one, wondering if this is the last time, whether the old witch of destiny will recover her sight tomorrow, it's possible, how much longer can the witch Diana be appeased in her milky monthly fullness?
Not much use looking at me sister, I'm supposed to be all skin and bones. . .
you know this, but I'm hiding nevertheless behind my mask. . .
I've got plans for you and me, except the contents of those plans will not

take place. . .
the awful wedding of cherry red dresses will be a postponement earnestly eternal. . .
No chance in other words. . .
we the last two on our forest earth, shorn of our taboos, will we be Eden or a mucky allotment?
What is to become of us even if we get out of this scrape?
And as you tip the old witch into the oven, flaming with the black flaps of desire/hunger/restlessness, will you unlock me as you stare through the bars of righteousness?
What a mess to get into, haven't you got any pride or fight left in you etc?
Well I'm staying to thaw out and eat every last scrap of the chocolate yum, stuff myself with all the goodies a woodcutter's son misses, no more roots, berries or chicken soup for me sister, go your own way. . .
I'm not finishing this very old and venerable fairy tale for you, or indeed with you. . .
it's dangerous enough, unless you wanted to join me. . .
Join me to eat the rest, which you won't. . .
At any rate touch this hand once again before you leave, it has furrowed your brow sufficiently already, a divorce of sorts is brewing, we must accompany it to its crossroads and then say goodbye. . .
go back and kill the stepmother and my whingeing father, the dope. . .
Enchanted by the forest calls, the truculent absence of the well-rounded phrase, I live the life out in hope. . .
For once the sister will not stay and become the old witch in her turn. . .
you know how the story has upheld these many years, through the succession of young girls not strong enough or cunning enough to avoid the metempsychosis of sorcery. . .
A series of wicked old women in turn, young minds trapped the old sheath of witchery flap flap. . .
Now it's time for a change, I will stay and become part of a new myth. . .
instead I will look at you in the mirror of the old cottage, rather than move on to the fiction concerning. . .
The fiction of some winsome young girl attracted to the promise of the magical and serene prince echoed in her pearly glass, whom she bewitches to stray to this part of the forest. . .
Yes maybe I will find the wife and not the sister, the friend and not the wife, my self echoed happily in the mirror of my friend, who knows?
Talk on till you're blue in the face and about to crush me. . .
but I won't be moved unless it's unconscious dream. . .
Even if I have to eat locked hay instead of unlocked chocolate. . .
The arrow will pierce whatever happens.

After your names:
I turn away from the wedding again

Just to say that the music continues. . .
in my sight and in my hearing, it melds. . .
The actual, and old Mozart tumbling on in his rapt exactitude, graceful to the point of oppression, though we're all so used to that. . .
it's in the blood (second draft). . .
And 'Antarctica' again (third draft) for old times' sake and so on and so forth. . .
But here, a hiatus, a leave-taking for a while to some and all of you. . .
yeah I've had enough. . .
Cavalier, you will understand. . .
Dearest reader, that staring into a moon-filled night can only crack apart a

vision for so long. . .
While a wisp of mind (wind) still clings to air, a chance remains to glide forth and leave the obsession to its own self-mystery. . .
Chigwell, your compassionate knowledge of human writing need not suppose a denouement (how kitsch and so on). . .
Yes I've had enough, so now it's. . .
The fallow period, of paying once more debts of time and effort to society, teaching/counselling etc etc. . .
Pausing to glance back at that shattered glass as I walk half-heartedly away. . .
Some balance of a pattern or order, however seemingly chaotic. . .
but I've got to think about whether it wants me to order it further or indeed whether destiny has that old grip on the viscera, does it want the comfort of paradigm?
At best it's now a template for something else, a shift along in the writing system towards the authentic voice. . .
a platonic suffusion of all that's tender-hearted in memory. . .
This sudden departure must not be translated as goodbye, for all the trouble you've taken or not taken to pick up this crumb of confidence. . .
we will return both of us to re-assemble, yet the form may not take on the reasonableness of affinity, more the stability of defence against the world and the acquiescence we promote as compromise. . .
Short-lived I may be. . .
the hour-glass has its own mirror reflection I fear. . .
Mortality at an end, someday. . .
and the fine accusation of self hurried along to its reconciliation.

Dear everyone:
the coda

Reconciliation does bend its considerable ear and salutes the sincere spirit, despite all the dents, skirmishes, don't knows. . .
the dodges, don't care lesses, it's official. . .
I'm turning round into myself, into you, and it's OK. . .
Remembering, recovering, uncovering, exploring, the darkness that has to be untangled, stood in, faced, reached into, in order to strike the chord of decision already taken. . .
to walk back towards the you that is myself, no separation. . .
The mirror melds and warps once more though the wounds are healing, the cracks are gliding backwards into the past, all flushed into the future,

all seeing the present. . .
Your names give way to the memory of a wise man letting go of the baggage that he doesn't need on this journey. . .
and it's my baggage he holds over the very same precipice, the same abyss I stretched my neck into all these years. . .
The rope given, is now discarded, I walk I talk I walk, I don't need to fly any more. . .
all the creatures may fly away and I'm not even naming them, they are themselves, I can love their reality enough to enjoy their flight away from possession. . .
The passage of time would seem to squeeze down to zero but at the same point expands with breath, the easy breath of reconciliation, with release, with compassion. . .
Uncovering the flight before the flier needs to take off. . .
and then I don't need to take off. . .
(Earth is here). . .
The earth is at my feet, I grasp a handful of its sweet fragrance, texture. . .
push it gently round my face, the richness, the dampness away from the dark, into. . .
Childhood, waking and walking in the fresh field, leading to a garden without walls. . .
The garden remains grey but flowers are colourful, all through the garden they shine. . .
then I'm walking very slowly along a path through my garden. . .
The house stands central, the upstairs room is prepared. . .
and I know you are there, sitting, waiting. . .
Walking freely, elegantly up the winding staircase, to a room furnished just as we need it to be. . .
In front of me the arras, a curtain ready to be pulled aside to show the vision at the end of my world, at the end of my journey to the ongoing conclusion. . .
head resting against the curtain, glancing around, slow motion, curving air of breath as the pressure releases the look for you. . .
Have you taken so long to find me in this place?
Your eyes raise, the shoulders turning, just gliding up, silkily and straight, the smile beginning to melt all my fears, the djinn myself, my hand just letting go the curtain, back to page 1, tendons and muscles in the arm widening, nails stretching and beginning to transform, the feather falls from my shirt. . .
Yours or mine?
It falls and floats tenderly to the floor. . .
The confetti of metamorphosis. . .
Are you walking across the room to retrieve it?